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Additional Correspondence of Robert Nicol

Introduction and Notes by
BRIG.-GENERAL E. A. CRUIKSHANK
LL.D., F. R. HIST. S.

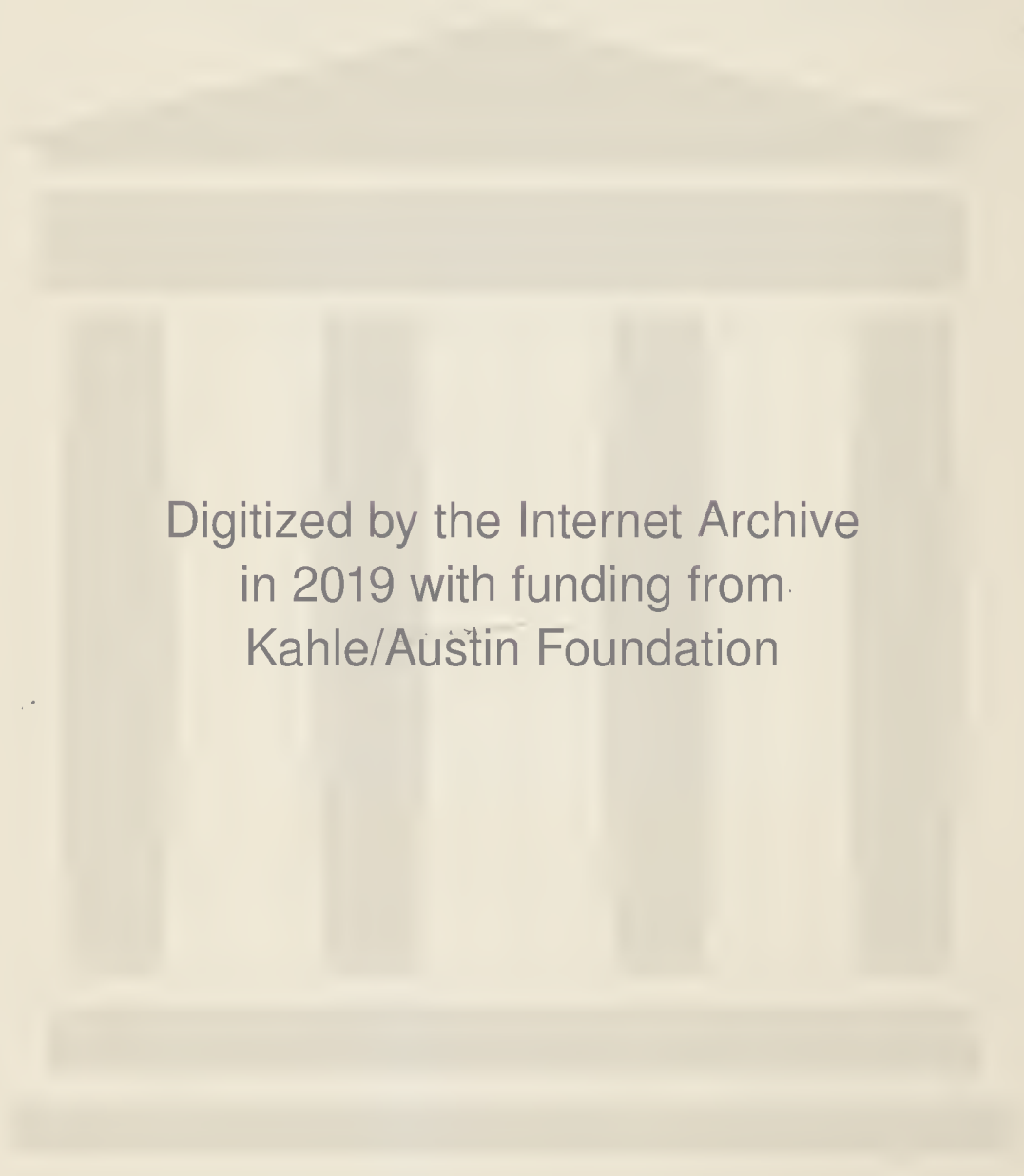
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1930

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III

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE OF ROBERT NICHOL

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY BRIG.-GENERAL E. A. CRUIKSHANK,
LL.D., F. R. HIST. S.

After Mr. C. M. Burton of Detroit had secured a large part of the papers of the Askin family for his notable collection of historical documents, the remainder was acquired by the Public Archives of Canada, where they have been arranged and now fill some thirty-nine portfolios. These papers consist largely of formal letters on commercial affairs and statements of account. But among them are a certain number of letters which supplement and fill gaps in the volumes in the Burton Historical Library. Some of the most interesting of these are letters written by Robert Nichol to John and Charles Askin, and copies retained by John Askin of letters written by him to Nichol, which go far to complete the correspondence already published in Volume XX of the "Papers and Records" of the Ontario Historical Society. After leaving Detroit, Nichol continued to offer advice to Charles Askin, who was then about twenty, and six years his junior, on the subject of self-education and incidentally indicates his own efforts in that direction. His letters to the younger Askin are remarkably cordial, frank, and self-revealing. Although their friendship was interrupted by a misunderstanding with his father, Nichol eagerly seized an opportunity near the end of his life, without solicitation, to give powerful support to his application for a government office.

Transcripts of other letters and reports written by Nichol have been appended from various other sources, which tend to illustrate his activity in public affairs, as a road commissioner, Quartermaster General of Militia, member of the Legislative Assembly, of the District Board of Education, and of Commissions for the improvement of internal navigation, and for the erection of a monument to General Brock, and complement those quoted in the memoir published in Volume XIX of "Papers and Records" or printed in the collection of letters mentioned above.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

QUEENSTOWN JULY 27TH 1800—

My Dear Sir,

Last week has really been a busy one with me at no time since the opening of the communication have I been so much hurried—owing to this cause it was not in my power to get the Lease for the House & Lot made out untill last night when I got it signed, by which means it is now secured, I inclose a transcript for your satisfaction, the original I shall keep by me until I have the pleasure of seeing you at this place next Summer.

It gave me pleasure to learn that you had got up in time for the Thames,* from the winds we have had here, I doubt not but you had a pleasant & Expeditious passage to the River's Mouth and I sincerely hope you found all your family as you could wish—By the first Vessell from Detroit I expect to hear from you a full Confirmation of my prediction.

*A small ship owned by Innis & McGregor, see Mich. Hist. Coll., XVI, p. 64.

I have not had an opportunity of seeing Norton, though be assured I shall embrace the first— I am to day busy arranging & Examining the papers as previous to Speaking to him I wish to make myself Master of the Subject, that I may not be taken unprepared—I have reason to think that he is a Shuffling Dog & that some of the letters he wrote you were not dictated by himself—I am pretty certain he has advisers and those not of the best kind, but I mean to proceed with him in Such a manner, as he can benefit but little by their counsel—I shall bring him if possible to Something Specific—& settle Every thing so as to leave no room for Cavilling or Equivocation. In the mean Time I think it would not be amiss if you would send me an Attested Copy of Anderson & Smith's Accounts, & if possible a Statement of the Account on which Mr. Askwiths settlement with him was Grounded—I remember seeing it once (I think) in the Bag for 1794—Apropos, while talking of delinquents—I must inform you of a discovery I have made—Since you left us—which I really hope may be productive of some Good to you—Mr. Henry Facer who owes you so much is come to this Country with an intention to settle here—I found it out in a very whimsical manner—the particulars however I shall not now mention—he is gone over to York for Land—I shall keep a good look out after him & if you chuse to intrust me with a Copy of his Account, I promise faithfully to do the needfull as far as in my power.

A parcel of papers now goes forward for Mrs. Askin—they however contain no News—

I hope you did not forget to remember me kindly to my Young friends at your House & to Mrs. Askin—I must however beg you to repeat it & to believe that I am &c. ROBT. NICHOL.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO CHARLES ASKIN

QUEENSTOWN, OCTR. 2 1800

Dear Charles

I this day had the pleasure to receive your very short tho' much esteemed favour of the 10th Ultimo, and am really happy to find, that you have at last *deign'd* to think me worthy of your Correspondence, as from your long silence, I had absolutely conceived the opinion that you cared very little about me. Being now however (here two lines are illegible.)

I observe what you say about being *timmerous* (you should write *timorous*) it is a Complaint incident to most Young letter Writers, but which Application & Habit will soon Master—I therefore Expect that you will not hesitate (on that Score) to write me whenever you can Spare time enough from your more necessary Avocations. Write me the News of the place—or any thing else that may come into your head, no matter what only Endeavour to write good Grammar and to Spell well—to these essentials you cannot pay to Much Attention—you have had the benefit of a good Education and ought not to acquire a habit of bad Spelling, which when further advanced in life (unless now attended to) you will find it difficult to get the better of—I recommend it seriously to your Attention to Examine all your letters before you close them, Carefully compare every word in the least doubtful with the Dictionary and by a little care & attention, you will soon correct a fault which is positively disgraceful in a grown person and to which I am sorry to see (torn and illegible.)

I had not half the Care bestowed on My Education which has been bestowed on yours, but by attending to what I have just recommended to you I have not had occasion for these five years past to make use of a Dictionary—

You will I hope pardon this freedom of my remarks they are not made from a Cynical disposition, but are really intended for your *Good*, indeed was I not convinced that you would view them in that Light I should certainly not hazard them.

I am always happy when I can contribute to the Enjoyment of my friends—and am therefor well pleased to understand that the Sporting Magazines are to you & your Brothers a Source of Amusement—Your Papa talks of sending them back this fall, it is however not necessary, as they are not wanted, to You they may be of some service & may prove an Agreeable Entertainment in a Winter Evening when the Business of the day is over—

(Torn and illegible.)

when the mind is soft & fit to receive any impression almost you Chuse, You have it therefore in your power to improve it to the utmost & be assured nothing will tend more to that end than reading—but Care must be taken to select Such Books only as contain useful information—As I shall from time to time touch upon what I have here mentioned I shall not tire your patience by too long a lecture at present.

Not knowing whether or not you are a Politician, I Shall not touch upon Politicks at present, especially as I forward pr this Conveyance your Papa's Papers—and I forbear inserting our Domestic Occurrences, as they are not of a Nature, either to interest or amuse you—Should however any thing occur deserving Notice—I shall not fail to advise you of it.

I have Spun out this letter to a greater length than I intended when I sat down—I shall not apologize for it as you have the power to revenge yourself on me by writing as long a one.

(Torn and illegible)

be assured of my regard—& that I am with unfeigned friendship &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO CHARLES ASKIN

QUEENSTOWN—NOVEMBER 2D—1800—

Dear Charles

It is now about a month since I did myself the pleasure of writing you a long letter by Captain Drake, which I trust you have safely received, & though I have not since heard from you (illegible).....again to write you, I hope therefore you will not blame me for obeying its impulse.

In my last I touched upon some particulars, which I thought might be of Service to you & promised to give you my further thoughts upon them—But my Occupations have been so numerous & Constant since that time—I have not had sufficient leisure to give the Matter that consideration, which an Object of Such Magnitude requires—during the winter I shall have more spare time to apply to it, & surely it cannot be better employed, for in my Endeavours to assist you—I shall have a most Excellent opportunity of improving myself—to me who am fond of reading & making observations on men and things it will be an agreeable amusement—& will I hope be to you an acceptable Token of my Esteem—I

forward at this time two Books which may prove a reinforcement to your winter's stock of Amusement—they can be returned in the Spring—I beg you will read Mr. Milne diligently—& endeavour to profit by the Instruction he contains—for be assured that it will contribute greatly to your acquiring a taste for writing your own Language—& will stimulate you to aim at correctness and elegance in your diction, which may some time or other be of great use to you; to enforce still more what I have said on the foregoing Subject I have transcribed a passage from the 353d Spectator.

Quotation beginning "While I am upon this Subject" and ending "you will feel the truth of it."

William & John* spent last Evening with me at our house—very pleasantly—and we did not forget our Friends in Detroit—I always think of it with pleasure when I meet with any of its Inhabitants—

By Mr. Shepherd & Mr. Badgely who staid with us nearly a week we had good accounts of you all—Some of your fair Cousins are, I understand, on the high road to Matrimony—I sincerely wish them a pleasant Journey—I hope that they may always meet with good roads & good weather in it.

Why cannot you tell me some thing about the News of the place when you write to me—how you go on with the Young Ladies known to me who have liv'd so long in Detroit—every thing of that kind is amusing—

At this place we are all Men of Business—no Ladies amongst us—& no time to Galant them—I can't therefore reply to your intelligence in kind but I will endeavour to make up for it in one way or another — — — — —.

They have been some time engaged in an Attempt to transport the Sloop Washington over the Portage—tomorrow is the day appointed for Starting her, & though I wish & many people are very Sanguine that she will be got over, I fear much they will be disappointed—After I have seen the result of the Experiment, you shall have a particular Account of it.

It is now past twelve o'Clock at Night & Mr. †Mor— has very officiously admonished me that it is time to go to bed, I feel that he is right & must give way to him but not before I have given you a particular charge to give my sincere respects to your Papa & Mama—& my best wishes & regards to your Brothers & Sisters—In wishing you a Good Night I subscribe myself truly your Friend

ROBT. NICHOL.

Mr. Charles Askin
Detroit.

(Askin Papers, Vol. XX.)

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO CHARLES ASKIN

QUEENSTOWN NOVEMR. 3D 1800—

Dear Charles

Since writing you yesterday—I have received your favor of the 19th Ult— advising that you had consigned 4 Barrels Cyder to me for Sale on your Account,

*Robertson. See *infra*, letter of Jan. 7, 1801.

†Probably Charles Morison, a Scottish fur trader. See Janet Carnochan's "Inscriptions and Graves in the Niagara Peninsula," *Niagara Historical Society*, No. 19, p. 14. His will is given in "Papers and Records," XXIII, 350, (*Ontario Historical Society*).

with these I shall assuredly do my best and doubt not but this your first Commercial Essay will turn to good Account—

My long letter of yesterday must apologize for the Shortness of this, and really my occupations are such that it is only on a Sunday I can venture to write you—

I beg my respects as before —and am with very real regard—Dear Charles
your Friend

ROBT. NICHOL.

Mr. Charles Askin.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO CHARLES ASKIN

QUEENSTOWN NOVEMR. 17TH 1800—

Dear Charles

I now wait upon you with account of the Sale of your four Barrels Cyder which you will find inclosed and inclose you

a draft on your Father—for	£14. 8
do on Wm. Gentle	2.16

£17. 4 N.Y. Cy. being

the amount due you of the inclosed Statement which I dare say you will find correct—

I hope the price obtained for the Cyder will meet your wishes as I have absolutely done my best with it.—

Captain Cowan would not accept any freight for it, by which means he has laid us both under an obligation which we must endeavour to repay him when an opportunity offers.

I shall only add that I will at all times attend, with great pleasure, to your future Commands—and be assured that the oftener you furnish me with opportunities of being of use to you—the more agreeable it will be to—

Your sincere Friend—

ROBT. NICHOL.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO CHARLES ASKIN

QUEENSTOWN, JANY 7TH 1801.

Dear Charles,

A favorable opportunity having offered, I should think myself much to blame if I did not embrace it to wish you at the Commencement of another year, many happy, very happy returns of the Season. Were I disposed to moralise I could not have a better opportunity to introduce a discourse on the Mutability of all human Affairs &c., &c., but fortunately for you I have more of the Epicurean than Stoic in my composition, you are therefore in no danger from me on that score, at which I dare say you are not displeased. I must not however forget my promise respecting Books, And first I know of no Book better Calculated to form a proper Style in writing, as well as the Morals of a Young Man than the Spectator—it is reckoned by good Judges to be the purest Language, the most finished wit of any in the English tongue—the Saturday papers merit your particular attention, indeed you cannot read them too often—History likewise is a very necessary Study—particularly that of your own Coun-

try, viz. of England, that of Hume is to be preferred—for the Elegance & perspicuity of the Language & the Strict impartiality with which every thing is related—Should you not meet with a Copy in Detroit—I have one which is much at your Service. Rollins ancient History you should by all means read, also Russells Ancient & Modern Europe, Robertsons History of Charles the 5th—Watsons Philip the 2d & 3d & Gibbons Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire. You will also derive much Entertainment & Information from Gilberts Greece—& I recommend it strongly to you when reading History—to refer to your Maps as often as occasion Requires—by which means you will acquire a knowledge of Geography—Buffon's Natural History will be both an interesting and amusing Study—Pope's Works should not be neglected & when you have got this length you will read Blair's Lectures on *Rhetoric & Belles Lettres* with great satisfaction—You will also read with increased pleasure—Shakespeare's works—which are justly admired by every person of Taste, both native & Foreign—

I have now in part discharged my promise—I however reserve to myself the right of writing upon the same Score as often as I may think it necessary—Should you not meet with the Books I have enumerated at Detroit it may be in my power to assist you, & I beg that you will let me know Such as you cannot find—

I mentioned in a former letter (I think) that I had been all last Summer a perfect slave to business—the Case is now however entirely reversed—& for this Month past we have hardly done any thing else than dance & feast about the Country without intermission, in fact we have lived during that time as if we had come into the world for no other purpose but to feast & make merry—Allowances must be made however for our inland situation & besides we ought not to censure too freely what is certainly a very innocent mode of enjoying ourselves when not carried too far—

Contrary to my Expectations the Sloop Washington has come Safe & sound across the Portage & is now lying at the Water Side before our door ready to be launched in the Spring—it was really a Grand Sight to see her coming down the Mountain above us & with what comparative ease she was moved, however the poor Man who undertook to bring her down sunk nearly £100—exclusive of his personal trouble in the Experiment, the Owners however I believe have agreed to remunerate him in Consequence of his very great perseverance & exertion.*

Hamiltons Family are all well—John & William† are at this moment by my side & when I finish this—we will have our usual Conversation about our Detroit Friends—

Tell your Sister that Miss Alice Ten Broeck is still at Mr. Hamiltons, is as *handsome* & Accomplished as ever—and that (to the great shame of the Niagara Beaux) she is still Miss Ten Broeck & likely to remain so. —

Tell her also that *Mr. Murray* has got into his New House above the Falls, but is quite melancholy & low spirited & that she need not be surprised to hear of his taking the leap during the Course of the Winter—All her other acquaintances are well—I know no others about whom I could take the liberty of talking to her except myself—which would not I presume be very agreeable

*Cf. Green, *The Niagara Portage Road*, "Papers and Records," XXIII, p. 278.

†Robertson, grandsons of John Askin, and step-sons of Hon. Robert Hamilton.

to her—Assure her however of my very Humble respects—Give my Affectionate regards to James & Alexr—also to Alexr. Grant—my Compliments to all my other friends—& believe me with very great esteem

Dear Charles—

Your warm friend

ROBT. NICHOL.

P.S. I beg you will burn
this when you have read it.

R.N.

Mr. Charles Askin.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO CHARLES ASKIN

Dear Charles

QUEENSTOWN FEBY. 16TH 1801

I have now to acknowledge the receipt of your separate favors of the 26th & 31st Ultio. which came to hand two days ago pr the Express and was exceedingly sorry to understand that your Father had been & still continued unwell.

I trust however that ere this his Health is perfectly re-established—Mention to him that I shall comply with his request respecting the House—

I refer you to my letter pr. Mr. Tiffany‡ for an Account of the transport of the late Washington, now the Track Roads, across the Portage, which will I trust prove satisfactory.

It gives me pleasure to hear that you are pleased with my Sale of your Cyder & that you have received payment agreeable to My Account—it was not of so good a quality as that sent by your Father the preceding year, should you send any down next fall be sure to have it of good quality and in clean tight Barrels as great deal of the Cyder which comes down here is spoil'd for want of attention to the Barrels. —

I am happy to hear of Miss Charlotte Grant's* marriage to Mr. Duff & hope that the Union may be productive of every happiness & Enjoyment to both parties—We have no Marriages here this year.—

As this is a busy time with us & as I wrote you a long letter the other day pr. Mr. Tiffany—I trust you will Excuse the Shortness of this—I have therefore only to beg that you will present my regards to your Papa & Mama—My Humble respects to your Sisters & Affectionate remembrance to James & Alexr. —in wishing you all Happiness & prosperity I am truly

Dear Charles

your Affectionate friend

ROBT. NICHOL.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

QUEENSTOWN JANY 19TH 1802.

My Dear Sir,

I have this day been favor'd with your obliging letter of the 31st Ultio. pr. the Express—and am truly happy to hear that yourself and family continue to enjoy good health—for the long continuance of which you have my sincere wishes—

‡Probably William Tiffany, the government printer at Niagara, See Simcoe Papers, III, 346; IV, 192, 196, 259.

*Phillis Grant, fifth daughter of Commodore Alexander Grant, was married on 20 January, 1801, to Alexander Duff. See "Papers and Records," XXII, 177.

The inclosure contain'd in yours has been received and proper use shall be made of it—indeed I have this very day instituted a Suit against Norton†—which I hope to bring to a favorable Issue—I believe I formerly mentioned—that he had acknowledged the Balance to me—So that you will be put to no difficulty in proving it—I shall direct the Attorney to prosecute for the full Sum—& leave him to prove his Account—

I fear that my friend Charles thinks me a trifling fellow—I have wrote him that I had forwarded a parcel for him Cont'g the History of England—which I find is still at Fort Erie—Mr. Baby, Mr. Warren tells me, would have taken it but was apprehensive his Boat would not get up to Detroit—He will receive it in the Spring which will I hope still be in good time—

I contemplated paying you a visit this winter & would have assuredly put my design in Execution was it not for Mr. Clarks intended Jaunt to Scotland—for which place he leaves this the first proxo.—of consequence my constant attendance at home is indispensable—I still hope tho to see you at Detroit in the Course of the next year—if every thing goes on right.—

It is only in the Summer Season & Fall that I am so busy—in the winter I have more leisure—but at neither Season does your Business interfere with my own—it is only the letter writing that interferes with it and there my friends have sufficient Charity to judge favorably of me—

Most cordially do I congratulate you on the return of Peace—the Benefits to the world in General in consequence thereof will be great & a portion of them will find their way to this Country—your Lands will rise in value—Population will increase and a Spur will be given to the energies of the Inhabitants which they have long wanted—It is a remark often made & I believe with truth—that the high price of Country Produce Checks the industry of the great Mass of the People and encourages Luxury & indolence. —

I am happy to hear that you are likely to procure Hemp Seed in your quarter—it is impossible to get any here & I hope that your Experiment will answer your Expectations. —

I have put up a few of the latest papers which I shall endeavour to persuade the Post Master to admit in the Mail—They Contain all that has transpired relative to the Peace & the Glorious termination of the Campaign in Egypt. —

Mr. Edward Warren goes up to Detroit about the 1st Feby. & by him I shall send the Almanacks, &c. I shall then write you I shall only add that I am with sentiments of affectionate regard to yourself & Family & with wishes for your & their individual health & Comfort.

My Dear Sir

Your Friend

ROBT. NICHOL.

John Askin Esquire
Merchant
Detroit.

†See "Papers and Records," Vol. XX, pp. 52-4.

FROM JOHN ASKIN SENIOR TO ROBERT NICHOL

DETROIT JANUARY THE 30TH 1802.

Dear Robert

I wrote you by last Express yet as I know it will give you pleasure to hear that all my Family & self are well is the reason principally for my writing you at this time.—Provisions are very plenty, flour at 12/ the french hundred *too low* Your Whisky cannot be brought on this side unless the Duty is taken of, its 2/4 per Gallon.

I mean to move Over in the spring but Charles will remain here for some time. Please present Mr. Clark with my Compliments and best wishes to John & William,* The whole Family desire to be remembered to you kindly

Adieu

Dear Robert

Yours

Its now the 3d of February & last night I was favoured with your Obliging Letter dated the 19th of last month. I much hope and Expect that Peace will bring about a favourable change in this part of the Country, its much wanted, I hope the steps you have taken will bring Mr. Norton to reason & that he *will by a fair offer* prevent his being thrown into costs which I do not see only so far as is necessary to Obtain Justice—You make yourself too Uneasy About the Books [you] were so kind as to forward for Charles he has been reading Robertson's History of South America—the News papers are not come, I suppose the Express could not take them. I should as well as all the Family been happy to have seen you this Winter, but Business must be attended to

Jean Durant a Vagabond whom you know has played me many Tricks & I cannot do anything with him here, by sending you a Power of Attorney could you not have his person taken in the first Instance on my Swearing here that I believe he means to leave the Province and defraud his Creditors.

Endorsed—Copy.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

QUEENSTOWN MAY 8TH 1802.

John Askin Esqr.

My Dear Sir

The Bearer of this Mr. Henry Brevoort† is a Young Gentleman of New York very respectably connected & whom I can with full confidence recommend to your Attention at Detroit—he proposes going as far as Michilimackinack—as he will be a Stranger in Detroit—I request your Civilities to him which shall be gratefully remembered by

Dear Sir

Your devoted Serv't

ROBT. NICHOL

*His grandsons, John and William Robertson.

†Probably Henry B. Brevoort, who afterwards became an officer in the United States army and eventually settled at Detroit.

FROM JOHN ASKIN TO ROBERT NICHOL

STRABANE NEAR SANDWICH JULY 31ST 1802.

Dear Robert

Without saying who wrote first or last at this Busy season I do not like to trouble you or any of my Friends with Letters however having a pressing matter now to trouble you with is principally my reason for now addressing you. Israel Ruland & our Friend Ebenezer Allan† owes me by note a Coppy of which is Inclosed £128.2s N.Y. Cur'y the latter I learn is disposing of what he has to take his departure as he lives in the district of London I cannot from this do anything with him. Please without loss of time consult a Lawyer as also Mr. Hamilton and have him or the Debt secured if possible.—I will thank you to let me know what has been done about Norton I before mentioned that I wanted to get Lands from him and Let Mr. Hamilton have them—myself & whole Family Thank God are very well, and we live much at our ease but within bounds from Land little can be made however our expences are very small when compared with those at Detroit. I have not heard nor from William & John for this long time please assure them of my Tender attachment to them tho' I do not much correspond with them rather because I would not take up their time to write me or embarrass them I have not wrote myself for you know I'm not at a loss to dash of a Letter right or wrong I wear no spectacles yet.

You have the good wishes of all my Family as well as that off

Dear Robert

Your Friend.

Endorsed—Robert Nichol, Mer't
Queenston (Coppy)
(Canadian Archives, Askin Papers, Vol. I.)

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

QUEENSTOWN SEPT. 13TH, 1802.

My Dear Sir,

It is so long since I have last written you that I feel myself at a loss in what manner to begin—the causes of my Silence have been multifarious, that I shall not attempt to recite them, but in assuring you they were unavoidable I flatter myself you will consider it a Sufficient apology.

I have now to acknowledge the receipt of your different favours, with their inclosures, under date the 31st July & 6th of August, & although I did not reply to them at the time, I did not neglect the business committed to my care but did every thing in my power to bring matters to a favorable issue.—

Mr. Powell* was the Attorney I employed to conduct your Suit against Norton—he has by far the most ability of any Attorney at our Bar—but unfortunately like myself—has not Sufficient Stability—I was assured by him that the Cause would come to issue at our Last Assizes—say the 30th Ultio.—& from the Proof which I could furnish I had not the Smallest doubt of obtaining a verdict—it seems however that notice of trial was not Served in Sufficient time, of Course it became a *remand* & will not come on till a new Commission of *nisi*

†See Simcoe Papers, III, 24; IV, 73 *et passim*.

*William Dummer Powell. See Riddell, *Legal Profession in Upper Canada*, 166-7.

prius issues for this District—I beg of you to believe that no part of this delay is attributable to me for I have done my utmost to see justice done you & shall now use my Exertions to have the matter settled by arbitration—(I mean by Merchants)—

If you make oath before Judge Powel at Detroit, (who is a Commissioner for taking Affidavits) respecting your Note against Allan he may be held to bail—but I am afraid you will meet with difficulty in recovering from him as there are two parties to the Note & the law requires that each Shall be served with a Copy of the process—perhaps you might catch Ruland on our side—which would Answer otherwise there is no mode of outlawing an absentee in this Country & you will be non suited Mr. Powell however being on the spot will give you the best advice in what manner to Proceed.

In taking Notes of hand, I advise you in future to Express no other Consideration than *value received* for I understand from Gentlemen conversant in the Business of Notes of Hand & Bills of Exchange that the law obliges you where a different consideration is Express'd to go into the proof of that consideration, which renders them not negociable.—

Having now gone through Business I proceed to matters of familiar intercourse, & in the first place I must notice the pleasure it gives me occasionally to hear of the good health of a Family for which I have so sincere an esteem—I fervently wish that they may long enjoy a continuation of that inestimable blessing, & that the progress in life of its young branches may equal the most Sanguine expectations of their Parents—I wish I could here add that I enjoyed my wonted good health, but this summer I have suffered more than I can well Express—the present unsettled State of the Country—the very unfavorable prospects for the future—Added to the loss on last years remittances—have had such an Effect on my mind naturally very Sanguine—that I have become a prey to melancholy—& am seized with a kind of languor which at times renders me quite Stupid—It requires all the Philosophy that I possess and indeed more than I can call myself Master of, to get the better of it—& indeed if the times don't soon alter for the better—I shall certainly leave this country in Search of a happier Clime where the little talents I possess may be more useful to me than they are likely to be here—

In making this determination I have duly considered the advantages & disadvantages of such a measure—& from the result—I think favorably of it.

Mr. Clark has not yet returned from his European tour nor do I now Expect him before the middle or latter end of November—he professes himself much pleased with the improved State of his own Country, & at the renewal of Old Acquaintances—

William & John* have both left Mr. Hamilton & are now doing business for themselves at this place—where I am afraid however they will not do much—they are both very prudent lads—especially William—& if Success does not follow their endeavours the fault will not be theirs—

The whole Country in our Neighbourhood has been grievously afflicted with an Epidemical disorder, Something like the dysentery Yet though many people have been ill with it there hath been Very few deaths, at Kingston however (I am told) several have died of it & that it rages there with much more Malignity than here—

*Robertson.

We have at last lost our Neighbour poor Mrs. Dickson†—She died on the 5th of this Month after having lingered nearly Nine Months without the most distant hope of a Cure—her sufferings were very great & some time previous to her dissolution she was wasted to a Skeleton—her patience under such a long course of complicated Suffering was Exemplary—I can say with truth that She is universally regretted.‡

I have done with Political Communications & must refer you to the News Papers for information—the Editor of the Spectator continues to forward the paper though he has been advised by me to discontinue it—It is of Course forwarded—though I am Sorry rather irregularly.—

I have nothing else to add, but a reiteration of my Sincerest good wishes toward yourself & family & that I shall always be with the sincerest regard—Your & their friend & Affectionate Serv't.

ROBT. NICHOL.

John Askin Esqr.

Strabane near Sandwich.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

QUEENSTOWN SEPT. 13TH 1802—

Dear Sir,

The Bearer of this is Monsr. Le Coulteulx* of whom So much public notice has been taken in this Country—He is now on his way to Detroit with a view of settling there as a Merchant—after having Suffered a Confinement of more than twelve Months in the Provost of Quebec—where I am Sorry to Say he was most Scandalously used—

His connexions in France are very respectable & he brought with him to this Country very flattering recommendations—You will find him well informed upon almost every subject with a vast fund of Anecdote—& although his political principles are not entirely such as *we* prefer—I think Mrs. Askin & yourself will be pleased with his acquaintance—

Referring to my other respects of this date I always am My Dear Sir

Very truly Yours

ROBT. NICHOL.

P.S.—Mr. Le Coulteulx from his long confinement has suffered greatly both in health & property and as no trial ever took place nor no Crime was ever Charged against him—being also a Citizen of the United States he conceives himself entitled to Compensation—I advised him to memorial the Government at home—but referred him to your long Experience for the best Counsel—

John Askin Esqr.

near Sandwich.

†Wife of Thomas Dickson.

‡She was formerly Mrs. Eliza Taylor; see "Papers and Records," III, p. 55 and XX, p. 48.

*Louis Le Coulteulx. See "Papers and Records," Vol. XXII, pp. 51-3, 58-9.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

QUEENSTOWN FEBY 17TH 1803.

John Askin Esqr.

My Dear Sir,

I was Some time ago favoured with your letter of the 10th Ult. & was happy to hear that all your family were in good health—all here are in the full enjoyment of that inestimable blessing—I am glad that you Spoke to Mr. Williams's Uncle respecting him†—though I fear without Effect—for tho' the Members of the Council & Assembly have been at York some time we have heard nothing of any person being ready to become bound for him—

William & John are not so badly off as you suppose, the principal Grievance under which they labour is the present distress'd State of this Country which renders their labour and Industry almost useless—Grain is now so low & Merchandise so high—the Farmers cannot afford to purchase—the Flour you write for shall be provided in the Spring unless you should countermand the order by the Express which is hourly Expected.

Should time permit I will again write you—Mean time with best wishes to the family I am Dear Sir

your friend

ROBT. NICHOL.

John Askin Esqr.

Merchant

Strabane near

Sandwich.

FROM JOHN ASKIN TO JOHN ROBERTSON.

NEAR SANDWICH MARCH THE 9TH 1803.

Dear John,

I yesterday had the pleasure of receiving your Letter dated the 23rd of last Month which afforded your Grand Mother & me much satisfaction not only to learn that you & your Brother William (when you last heard from him) was well but also that your Trade in all probability would afford you the means of living without geting in Debt which to an honest man of feeling is a most grievous misfortune. On the score of Trade I have been thinking when flour, Whisky, Salt & sometimes other Articles at your place are low Chas. could dispose of them here on your joint accounts & often to good advantage, in this matter I wish Mr. Nichol to have a share he is your most stanch friend & uncommonly desirous to serve me. I think him as good a hearted young man as I know, your Dear Mother recommended him to me which I never will forget. I'm now fitting out the Saguinah which may cost Ab't £300 and trying to sell shares of an eight of her to whoever has freight to give. To such I ask no more than £100 York for a share but from those who would not have anything to put on Board I would not take much more, for without freight a Vessell is not worth anything. I think Mr. Nichol with you and William should take an 1/8 share. I can take payment in flour, Whisky, salt, Pork or things of that kind. I would be the last man in the world to recommend anything of the kind

†See "Papers and Records," XX, p. 59.

to any of you if I did not think you would gain by it. Provisions & some other matters for her use could be taken from you, so that instead of disbursing Money you and Mr. Nichol would always have some to receive. The £100 is exclusive of every partner's share of repairs &ca. its needless to write both Mr. Nichol & you on the same Subject you will therefore please to shew him this part of my Letter and let me have your answers—as the shares I sell are so very low that I am sure they will soon be all purchased, two besides my own are already sold. Respecting the deplorable situation of your poor uncle,* I feel as a real friend for another but I dread there is no remedy. Therefore his attornies should prepare for the worst & try to get his property in such a situation before their power ends to secure it as much as possible from falling into the Hands of the Rascals you mention. I'm something at a loss what to advise respecting the taking out of the Deeds, perhaps the Government could better keep the Worthless Character from succeeding there your uncle's attornies for untill the Grants are taken out in time I doubt if he can give the Lands to any one & once Dead I have every reason to suppose they would be granted for the Benefit of his Heir. I think you should take Council of the Attorney General as to the most Effectual means of securing the property against this worthless Character and send me a Coppy of his oppinion. As likewise if your Power will be good after your Uncles Death untill you hear of that event should it please God. our Family in General enjoy good Health, may such be the portion of you & your Brother is their most ardent wishes as well as that of my Dr. John, Your affectionate Grand Father

(Unsigned.)

Mr. John Robertson

Merchant

Queenston

(Canadian Archives, Askin Papers, Vol. I.)

FROM JOHN ASKIN TO ROBERT HAMILTON

STRABANE NEAR SANDWICH MARCH 12TH, 1803.

Dear Sir

Your favour of the 11th of last Month reached me a few days Ago, it gives me much pleasure to learn not only that your famly are well, but also collected Under your Eye which in my humble oppinion when it can be effected without their Education neglected is much the best for Parent & Child.—Your likely to bring up the rear at York, it appears to be a long Session, whats done we will soon learn. —

Your produce seems pretty low with you, however its a great Blessing to have Abundance. I did not know that flour bore so good a price in lower Canada as to enable you to send any down. The Saguinah is now under repair. Captain Fearson says he does not think it will exceed £300, York. Meldrum and him have each a share in her. Will you give me credit for £100, Above Cur'y & pay yr. proportion of repairs and you shall have 1/8 share. If I can only get freight for her she will Assuredly make Money, therefore I want seven partners besides myself all of whom able to procure some freight & I would rather give an 1/8 share to such for £100 than get £200 from another

*William Robertson.

who could not procure any. I'm very sorry Indeed for Poor Robertson's situation, surely that extraordinary Will he made cannot be valid. If there was any chance of its being so, I should think not to take out Deeds in Mr. Robertson's name for the Lands reported on by the Commissioners in his favour. Government I suppose could give them to his Heirs.

(Askin Papers, Vol. I.)

FROM JOHN ASKIN TO ROBERT NICHOL

STRABANE MARCH THE 10TH 1803

Dear Robert

I was favoured with your kind Letter bearing date the 27th of last Month two days ago and give you joy of the safe return of your worthy Partner,* to whom please give my best compliments, he brought me a letter from a worthy old acquaintance and friend Colo. De Peyster to whom I wish to make (torn) as he is well acquainted with Mr. Clarks Family the opportunity of writing when Mr. Clark does would be the best, please let me know when. I fear like you that no Bail has been provided by Mr. Campeau for his Nephew the former heard that an uncle of Mr. Williams had went from Albany to York therefore perhaps depended on his finding Bail.—I received a long sensible Letter from John Robertson and it gives me much pleasure to find that his brother's prospects and his is not bad. respecting their unhappy uncle† & his affairs, I have advised what I thought best, you will see the Letter for in it there is a proposal from me to your house, and his, to take an Eight share in the Saguinah, she is now under repair & I hope will be with you soon. I think I will be able to fall on some scheme by which she will take of a good part of the produce you may have in flour & Grain with some Whisky & Salt which at the worst will bring you prices with freight other expences & Risk, by which means your produce will turn into Cash and the Vessel make freight. I shall not countermand what I wrote about the 100 Barrels of Flour on the contrary perhaps when the Saguinah goes down she may bring down from your House double the quantity or more; Let me know the prices of all sorts of grain with you as well as Whisky, Salt, or any other Commodity you have to dispose of that is Bulky and you Think will answer here, what's the price of Rye, I think of keeping the Saguinah plying between Fort Erie, this & on to St. Marys and Michil'c with Flour, Whisky & Salt and some other commodities for sale for Cash or Peltries and some times Sugar when it sells well with you, what's real warranted Strong Cider worth the Bar'l to be delivered next May. Trade must be forced if it will not come itself.‡

All my Family Thank God enjoy good health and I'm sure you have their best wishes as sure as mine.

(Unsigned)

P.S. any hopes about Norton I wish I could raise something there to enable me to pay Mr. Hamilton who is so modest as not to make a Demand.

(Canadian Archives, Askin Papers, Vol. I.)

*Thomas Clark.

†William Robertson, formerly of Detroit who was then in England.

‡See "Papers and Records," XX, pp. 59-60.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

NIAGARA MARCH 29TH 1803—

Dear Sir,

I was on the 27th instant favoured with your Obliging letter of the 10th and am exceedingly happy to hear that your family continues to Enjoy good health—for which my sincerest wishes are uniform—I at the same time thank you for your congratulations on Mr. Clarks return who desires me to present to you his sincere respects—he at the same time desires me to Say that he will have frequent opportunities of forwarding your letters to Colo. De Peyster—and will with great pleasure take Charge of any committed to his Care—

Williams I believe has now given up the idea of procuring Bail—he has laid so long in Jail & the period which he has still to remain is so much Shortened & the Expence which it would occasion to procure his enlargement are all strong arguments to induce him to remain where he is untill brought to trial.

I have been from home & have not had an opportunity of seeing your letter to John nor your proposal respecting the Saguinah, from various circumstances, however I do not think that it will meet the views of those to whom you may have imparted it here—as there is a general disposition to Contract instead of enlarge business in this quarter—I may add—that for myself—my views are no longer directed to an Establishment in this Country—the business of which labours under such disadvantages—that no person so disengaged as I am & at my time of life could with propriety continue in it—I shall therefore by the opening of the Communication or at least soon afterwards—undertake a Journey to Montreal & New York where I have some tolerable prospects of forming an advantageous establishment—at all events—the opportunities in Such a place are more frequent than in this quarter—for advancing in life & I am determined to try it—

It is not however improbable that I may see you at Detroit previous to my final departure—in which Case I shall fully communicate my plans which I know you will approve—it would have given me much Satisfaction to have fixed myself in the Neighbourhood of those connexions which I had formed in this Country—but my remaining would not advantage myself—& it therefore becomes a duty to go elsewhere—

The Flour shall be ready at Fort Erie—& I recommend if your intention is to send the Saguinah—to send her early—as the sooner her Cargo gets to Market the better the prospect of its being well sold—

Nortons Cause will come on next Assizes at which time it will be brought to Issue—& I shall endeavour to procure information respecting Fesser* & act accordingly—agreeably to your desire I annex the prices of grain &c. in this quarter—I am with the Sincerest regard & most affectionate attachment & good wishes to every branch of your family—

My Dear Sir—

Your Friend
& Servant

ROBT. NICHOL.

*Henry Facer or Fecer. See *ante* and "Papers and Records," XX, 53.

near Sandwich.

You will see by the Papers forwarded to you the unsettled State of Publick Affairs—there has been great Expectations of a rupture with France—how it will terminate is Still a Matter of doubt here—but Candidly Speaking much as I deprecate War—& the Evils concomitant with it, I wish that it may take place—as under the existing Circumstances I do consider it as the Only thing that can Save us from destruction—unless indeed France make Such Concessions as will place us in a State of security.

It will no doubt occasion you all great Surprise to hear that your Old Friend William Robertson has married Mrs. Dunlop, the Mother of Mr. Ogilvy, she is an excellent prudent woman, & had he married her first it might have saved him from those vile habits which he has acquired & which I much fear he will retain in Spite of all her prudence & good Management—

This Match will in my Opinion be in favour of William & John, as it will detach him from that herd of Sycophants & worthless Scoundrels which had by keeping him in a continual State of Inebriation & by flattering his whims & ministering to his follies acquired Such an Ascendant over him as to induce him to make a New Will in which he left the greater part of his Fortune to them—

I beg my Constant good wishes may be communicated to your Fireside & am with unceasing regard

My Dear Sir
Ever yours
ROBT. NICHOL.

John Askin Esqre.
Strabane
near Sandwich.

FROM THOMAS CLARK TO JOHN ASKIN

QUEENSTON, JULY 18TH, 1803.—

Dear Sir

I have to acknowledge receipt of your two favours of the 28th June & 5th July to T. Clark & Co. & two others of the 8th & 29th June to Mr. Robt. Nichol.—your 20 Barrels salt were forwarded some time ago these I hope you have received—the other 8 now go up along with the 2 Barrels Whisky which last will be shipped in one of the vessels now at Fort Erie—My neighbour farmer Phelps tells me that from 2½ to 3 lb. Clover seed with one pint Timothy seed is the proper quantity for an Acre—these mixed with sand makes them sow more equally—we send you in a box 18 lb. Clover seed and One Bushl Timothy seed 26/

Wheat with us at present is 5/ to 5/6 Pr. Bush. flour Pr. barrel of 196 lbs. is about 36/. Pork little or none to be had, it having all been sent to lower Canada where it brings 20 Dollars, Rye about the same price as Wheat—Pease & Corn none in the market—The quantity of Flour that could be purchased before the first of November would be but triffling as it is now going very fast down to be in time for the shipping—

Mr. Nichol went to Montreal on the 10th inst., but previous to that & the rec't of your letter of the 29th I find he had engaged Mr. W. D. Powell, Junr. who goes up to Sandwich with the Judge to undertake your causes as executor to Dr. Harfey's Estate—

Inclosed you have an account of the Whisky &ca.* With best Compts. to
Mrs. Askin & family

I am Dear Sir

yours very truly

THOMAS CLARK.

John Askin Esqre.
Sandwich.

FROM THOMAS CLARK & CO. TO JOHN ASKIN

QUEENSTON, SEPTR. 3RD, 1803—

John Askin Esqre.

Dear Sir,

We are favored with yours of the 21st July & 1st Augt and would have sooner replied to them but the Saguina has been at Presqu'isle and we have deferred it to write by her—

The Saguina has earned 52 bbls. salt by her Voyage to P. Isle—these now go up in her as also 8 bbls superfine flour for you marked J. A. and a spinning wheel 48/—Capt. Fearson declines purchasing any more salt on Acc't of the Owners of the Sloop.—We have no more Pork remaining therefor cannot send you any of that—there is some for sale at Buffalo Creek—We have told Fearson to purchase you a Barrel or two of that, should he think it will answer—

Timothy seed may be sown at any time, Clover should be put in the ground during the present month or in March—

Pothiers draft on McTavish & Co. & Gillespies on Parker & Co. came duely to hand—

We charge you 6 Dollars Pr. Barrel for the flour now shipped at Fort Erie—which to you may appear high—but it only makes it equal to What it would bring us had it been sent to Montreal—Your letter has been forwarded to Col. Depaystre.—

We are

Dear Sir

your obed't Serv'ts

THOMAS CLARK & Co.

(Askin Papers, Vol. X.)

FROM THOMAS CLARK & CO. TO JOHN ASKIN

QUEENSTON, SEPT. 11TH, 1803

John Askin Esqre.

Dear Sir,

On writing you on the 3d inst. we omitted to mention—your Cidre being received at Fort Erie—it did not prove to be good—and to augment the expence by bringing it down here would be improper, have therefor left it with Mr. Warren at Ft. Erie to make the most of it—

*See "Papers and Records," XX, 60.

We find Capt. Fearson has purchased for you two Barrels pork for which we have paid £14.8.0 New York Currency as Pr. enclosed order at your Debit with

Dear Sir
your obed't Serv'ts
THOMAS CLARK & Co.

FROM THOMAS CLARK & CO. TO JOHN ASKIN

John Askin Esqre.

FORT ERIE OCTR. 22ND 1803—

Dear Sir,

We are favored with your letter of the 5th instant the Contents of which we have duly noted.—Previous to your letter Coming to hand—the Stores for the Saguinah had arrived at Queenston addressed to Mr. Dickson by whom they were forwarded to Fort Erie—we however lost no time in inclosing your letter to Mr. Nichol who made immediate enquiry after them the result of which is that the greatest part of them have been shipt in the General Wilkinson as belonging to Abbot and Maxwell—a list of those is annexed with the remainder we will endeavour to do as directed—

Butter is at present very Scarce at this place—we shall however try to send the quantity you require by the last vessel.

The Caledonia is getting under weigh which occasions us to be brief—we shall only add that the Concern of Thomas Clark & Co. has been dissolved by Mutual Consent—and that the Settlement of their Accounts remains with Mr. Thomas Clark—to whom you will in future please address yourself.

As Mr. N. writes you separately we refer to him for other Particulars—and we are very truly

Dear Sir
Your Obedient
Humble Servants
THOMAS CLARK & Co.

On Board the Wilkinson

A & M. 10 Coils Rope 7. 8. 10. 6. 0. 1. 0. 11. 9. 4.
4 Barrels— 3. 0. 0. 0.
1 Tierce 0.

—
15 Articles —.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

John Askin Esqre

FORT ERIE, OCTR. 22ND, 1803.

My Dear Sir

Your separate favors of the 20th July and of the 5th Instant are now before me, the first arrived at Queenstown Soon after my departure for Montreal—was forwarded to that place after me—from whence it was sent to Niagara where I received it on the 9th Ulto.—the last I duly received by the Caledonia—You and I my dear Sir—have long known each other—& I may say—for People of different ages have been pretty intimately acquainted—therefore *Entre Nous* Ceremony and Compliment are not so much to be minded—I must

however say that had time permitted I would have long ago answered your very friendly letter of July—I feel the Truth of your remarks and am proud to think that my sentiments so nearly correspond with your own—

I am now My Dear Sir beginning the world on a new establishment—with good connections and support—and I hope that I shall be able to fight my way through the different obstacles which stand between me & *Fortune*—with my knowledge of the business of the Country—Industry & application &c., I think I have as fair a prospect of Success as any person in it.—tho' *You* well know that Industry and exertion are not always crowned with Success—nevertheless having put my hand to the Plough I will not look back but persevere to the end—As my present view is to embrace every Object that may Appear profitable—I have some thought of hulling a Quantity of Corn—but have been hitherto deterred from engaging in it from my not understanding the Process properly—& the necessary Calculations consequent thereto—On this Subject therefore I refer myself to you, knowing your disposition to afford me every information that may be beneficial and I think should my present Ideas of it turn out to be Correct it will be in my power to Contribute largely to the Saguinah in the way of freight—In giving me the necessary information You will of Course take every contingency into Account viz. the Quantity of Ashes required to hull 100 Bushels with the average diminution it sustains and the difference between Indian & Settlement Corn—also the price it brings pr. Minot at Mich. & the Sault—& the Quantity that might be disposed of to Chance Customers with the Payment that may be Expected—to be plain with you if it can be made a Matter of Sufficient Consequence I should wish to make it advantageous to you either by participating in the risk & Profit—or by Commission. On this Subject I could wish you to be very explicit—and to write me by the very first Conveyance—

It gave me My Dear Sir, you may well Suppose, a very Sensible Pleasure to learn the prosperous State of your Family Concerns—and that you all enjoy'd good health—long may you possess that choicest of blessings with every comfort that the world Affords—I am happy to hear that Charles & James have begun business for themselves, and sincerely wish them Complete Success—any thing that I can do for them from this quarter Shall be cheerfully done—and I am in hopes that it will not be long before I shall have an Opportunity of being Serviceable to them.

The Saguinah must be heré first vessel in the Spring viz. as early as it is possible to Sail (Fearson must be more energetic) when through my Means I trust she will procure a load—this information you will keep to yourself as such is the responsibility attatched to a Forwarder of Goods and the *Jealous, Envious* Medium, in which all his actions are viewed, that it was known the Saguinah received any partiality from me—it would materially injure our Forwarding Business—and draw down upon me the reproaches of every Captain in Port.

I received the Barrel of Apples for which you have my Sincere thanks—I am Sorry that this place affords nothing rare to Send Mrs. Askin in return—however when better acquainted with it—I may probably find out some thing or other—I have Examined your Cyder here—& think it by no means bad—depend on my making the best of it. I Wrote you this date (T. Ck. & Co.)—and mentioned the dissolution of the Copartnership between Mr. Clark & me—We found that it was not beneficial to either & agreed to Separate—but as great

friends as ever—I recommend him to you as A Man of the Strictest Probity and one who you may trust in every Conjunction—

I will thank you when writing to quote the state of your Provision Markets—the price that may be expected for Pork & Flour &c.—as it will be in my Power to procure a considerable quantity of each during the Winter.—

I refer you to the Papers for News—on which the length of this letter prevents me from Commenting.—Adieu My Dear Sir—remember me with affection to Your Family and believe me with sincere attachment—Your Friend & Servant

ROBT. NICHOL.

P.S. What do you ask for your Kettles and can you Spare Black Tom for a few Months to instruct Me in the Business.

FROM JOHN ASKIN TO ROBERT NICHOL

NEAR SANDWICH NOV 18TH, 1803.

Dear Robert,

Your much esteemed favour of the 29th October did not reach me untill the 12th Inst., it is the only letter I received from you since your arrival at Fort Erie and I assure you it affords us all great satisfaction to hear not only that you are well but likewise settled to your wishes and I not only hope but also believe that your proposed mode of Trade will turn to good account if you persevere for the Marketts of Michilimackinac are so fluctuating that what no one will buy one day in two weeks after it will fetch a very good price for Captain Fearson tells me who arrived here a few days ago that when he left it, he thinks he could have sold One Hundred Barrells of Flour for £6 the Barrell and perhaps 20 or more of Pork for £16 tho' when he sold that belonging to Messrs. Thomas Clark & Co and myself he had hard work to get £4 per bbl. of 224 lbs. each. there is a part of the year when all the Tailors, Weavers, Shoemakers and Yankee Carpenters of Detroit go up with Adventures of Whisky, Salt, Bacon, flour, Corn &ca. and as they cannot stay sell them for what they may fetch. Therefore the best time to sell is before and after them they never go there very early in the Spring nor late in the fall. I will now answer your enquiries respecting hulled corn indian the process is very simple indeed so much so that every Canadian understands it, in particular all old Voyagers and any Man may learn it in a day or two; the quantity of ashes cannot be ascertained for owing to the strength more or less is required in a Kettle that will contain about a Bushell and a half of Corn with sufficient water and Ashes, you may put a spade full of ashes after it comes to the boil if you do not find in a short time by rubbing a grain between your fingers that the skin of the corn will come off add more ashes untill it does and then let it be taken off the fire and the corn washed in bucketts that will let out the ashes and retain the Corn it must then be put in Baggs of $\frac{1}{2}$ bushel each well sewed up. I will if I do not forget send you a Kettle in the Spring C/o Captain Fearson with an other that goes inside in Order to retain the lie which in the common one is lost and therefore requires more Ashes. The sale of this comodity is very precarious at times, but when wanted brings a good profit and sooner or later in the Season its almost always wanted. The true method in my oppinion to proceed in the sale of Hulled Corn, Flour, Pork, &ca. is this let the quality be good send them early in the

year so as to be at Michilimackinac by the 10th of June, few traders are there before that time, fix or let me fix it at what price these commodities are to be sold and never let them go for less: if they remain on Hand you may depend on it they will afterwards fetch more than will pay the established price and interest for after abundance in that Quarter scarcity follows, nothing ever being laid up at Michilimackinac for a Rainy day. If you choose to provide 200 Barrells of Flour of 196 lb. each 20 or 30 Barrells of Pork well cured with from 150 to 200 Baggs of Hulled Corn of $\frac{1}{2}$ bushells each, I have no objections to take a half share in them, however you will not receive your payment but only as they are sold, but for what may remain on hand after the 15th Inst. I have no objections to interest being charged thereon. I think this sufficient for the first trial & I have no doubt will do well the freight in the Saguinah will not be required untill the articles are sold & I will charge it and debit the concern with it so no money will have to be laid out on that account. If you agree to this the sooner you begin to purchase the better for flour & grain will rise, wheat is now at 8/ & indian corn at 6/ the English bushel both rising and will be much higher, more is lost on hulling on the Indians Corn than that of the settlement, Ashes with us not sifted bring only 1/ per bushel. If this article was scarce with you the Saguinah could take some down early in the Spring.

I am my Dear Sir well persuaded as are all my Family how desirous you are to serve both them and me: however I must insist that you do not give any preference to the Saguinah which in the smallest degree would affect your character as a forwarder of goods, but the Provisions &ca. for sale you may call mine if you choose which will prevent any jealousy on that account. I recommend it strongly to you not to make any contracts with the Montreal merchants for corn, flour, &ca.

The boys have made a beginning and in a small way I dare say will do well, they are well satisfied of your great wish to serve them & I make no doubt opportunities will offer, you have their & my thanks for your kindness.—I have the highest opinion of Mr. Clark and am very happy you parted as friends, had it been otherwise it would have given me pain.

My hulling kettles except one which is cracked I have sold, this one I mean to send you in order to your ordering some out of the same kind which I found answered well. Not having any thing to add or even knowing when there will be an opportunity of sending this, I have only to assure you of Mrs. Askin's and all the family's best wishes as well as those of Dear Robert

Your Sincere Friend*

(Unsigned)

Mr. Robert Nichol
Merchant
Fort Erie.

*For Nichol's reply see "Papers and Records," XX, 60-1.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

FORT ERIE JANUARY 9TH 1804.

Dear Sir,

The Bearer of this Mr. William Burns, is Agent for Lord Selkirk who has some intention of forming a Settlement at the Chenail Ecarte.† I have ventured to introduce him to you as an honest & Intelligent English Farmer—well acquainted with the Theory & Practice of Agriculture—(& tho blunt) a very excellent Man—I have ventured to say that he may put unlimited Confidence in you & safely consult you upon any Occasion wherein he may be in doubt—Should the Settlement go on of which I think there is strong prospect—he will be able to put a Considerable portion of his Lordships business into your hands—provided that it should turn out to be of that Nature—which you have been accustomed to—I might wish to (torn) in, this however will be the Subject of a future Communication—Mr. C. & myself will have the business here—

His Lordships plans are extensive & embrace a variety of Objects—and your knowledge of the Country between Detroit & St. Marys completely qualifies you for a Confidential adviser—and will entitle you to his Lordships personal Consideration—I think you have Mentioned that Charles was well acquainted with the Land Survey—In that case I think that his Lordship may put a great deal of his business into his hands—I therefore recommend him Employing all his leisure time in perfecting himself in that Branch as it may pave the way to something better—

I offer to Mrs. Askin & family the usual Compliments & best wishes—and am with every sentiment of Friendship My Dear Sir

Always yours

ROBT. NICHOL.

P.S. I some years Ago borrowed for the use of My friend Charles some Volumes of Hume's History of England—I shall be glad to have them returned as the owner now wants them—‡

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

QUEENSTOWN MARCH 15TH 1804

My Dear Sir

I was yesterday favored with your letter of the 28th February in answer to which have to say that I laid in a Considerable quantity of the Flour ordered—your 50 Barrels flour & 4 Barrels of Pork shall also be got ready in time & forwarded Pr. the first vessel as you direct—

†This refers to Selkirk's Baldoon settlement in the Township of Dover. "The Earl of Selkirk commenced a settlement in the Township of Dover, which he called 'Baldoon', in the year 1803 (?), with a party of 111 people. The situation was badly chosen, and was sickly, and 42 of the settlers died the first season; and the settlement was afterwards nearly destroyed by an invading party of Americans, during the war. The Earl caused a road, called 'Baldoon Street', to be cut out from the settlement to the River Thames, but from part of the road passing through an extensive marsh, which renders it impassable during a considerable portion of the year, the settlement has gradually dwindled away."—"Canada, Past, Present and Future" by W. H. Smith, (1851). The settlement was managed for the Earl of Selkirk by the Hon. Alex. Macdonell, the first sheriff of the Home District.

‡Letters from Nichol to John Askin, dated 18 January and 1, 11, and 15 February, 1804, are printed in "Papers and Records," XX, pp. 61-3.

Tho' Confident that I could procure freight enough to Complete the lading of the Saguinah the probability of its being all on the Spot sufficiently early is so doubtful that I must act prudently and decline Chartering her—I think that the terms are not so reasonable as those granted to Mr. McCrae—if I remember right he was to be at Fort Erie on the 1st of May weather permitting & not to be subject to demurrage until after the 20th—this you will perceive must make a Considerable difference in my endeavours to serve the Owners in the freight way—I have been Considering the business of freight maturely—I think (being a Merchant) that I ought to have a small Commission on such freight as I may be able to Procure for her, this was the vessel entirely yours I would never think of charging—but the Case is materially different—I will therefore take every pains and brave every Charge of partiality, provided I am allowed a Commission of $2\frac{1}{2}$ P. Cent which is I think moderate enough for the Obloquy I must encounter—

The Cash price of Flour at Fort Erie is five Dollars, Mr. Clark receiving that for 300 Barrels furnished by him—

I have spoken to Mr. Clark respecting your small Vessel for Lord Selkirk & you may with Confidence depend on his friendly Offices with his Lordship in your favor—One thing I must inform you of—His Lordship is particularly averse to everything resembling Cringing or Studied Civility—An Independent mode of thinking and Acting is the Strongest recommendation to his Consideration and with this knowledge of his disposition properly Acted upon You may Confidently expect his intimate acquaintance—When I say an Independent Mode of thinking and Acting I mean decent respect for his Lordship equally removed from Bluntness and fawning Servility—

With Sentiments of the warmest regard for yourself & family I am ever their & your friend

& Humble Servant

ROBT. NICHOL.

John Askin Esqre
Strabane.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

FORT ERIE JULY—8—1804

My Dear Sir

Good winds and fair weather brought me home this morning about Seven o'Clock having had a most delightful passage of Forty Six Hours. I am sure you will participate in my satisfaction when I assure you that my business has in my Absence been Conducted with the utmost prudence, Circumspection & propriety—indeed had I been personally present things could not have gone on more to my Mind—I have not yet been able to ascertain the probable market for flour, &c. in this neighbourhood, my wish is however never to suffer your desire to Serve me to interfere with your interest and as I consider flour at five Dollars pr. Barrel as a loosing business to you under present circumstances—I am perfectly willing to release you from the Engagement at the Same time Assure yourself that I will not relax in my endeavours to procure all the freight in my power for the Saguinah—and that I have dropt all Idea of Commission indeed I am ashamed I ever made the proposal—

I have not yet had an Opportunity of settling with Mr. Clark the Balance of the Skin Account I however go down tomorrow & will arrange the Matter with his Man of business he being at present in Montreal—

I am anxious My Dear Sir to remit all I can this fall—therefore the flour & Pork forwarded by me—I shall be glad to see sold at any price so as to Cover prime Cost & Charges I resign to you all profit over & above the Invoice price—

I have found at this Place a Parcel of your News Papers, herewith inclosed they contain most interesting intelligence, the debates in Parliament shew the temper of the times—& mark the extreme interest which all parties take in the present Crisis—you will observe the prompt & unequivocal disavowal in parliament of the traiterous Correspondence ascribed to our Bavarian Embassador Mr. Drake, & the jealous sensibility with which the Conduct imputed to him was received in England—A Change of Ministry has at length taken place. & that truly great, truly honest & truly good Man Mr. Pitt—has at last Come into Office—under his Management & with his honest Zeal what may we not expect I am however Sorry to perceive that he is not accompanied in his Official Arrangements by Lord Grenville—Mr. Windham & Lord Spencer. Still however I must Suppose that his return to Office in the present Manner met their approbation—& that his Measures will receive their most decided Support—

Buonaparte has been declared Emperor of the French & the Succession hereditary in his family, how degraded are the Modern French, when after Combatting twelve Years for liberty & Equality—they elevate a Corsican Adventurer to the throne of Charlemagne—the Arrest and Murder of the Duke of Enghien has Created an Amazing Sensation in several European States & I shall not be surprised to see the flames of War extended to the whole Continent the Ambition of the new Emperor seems to increase with his good fortune—and who can say to him *Ne Plus Ultra*. I have however Some Hopes that his good fortune will disappear before the Genius of Britain—

I write this letter in a great hurry & have no time to Copy over or Correct it, in writing to you however I feel that every allowance will be made—I have no Occasion to renew to you the good wishes which I must ever feel for every branch of your family, I trust that they are all Sensible of the Sincerity of my regard—I shall be ever happy to hear of their welfare & happiness & shall Cordially participate in every increase it may sustain—Adieu My Dear Sir & believe me with every possible esteem & regard—Your Most Sincere friend

RORT. NICHOL.*

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN CRAIGIE

FORT ERIE UPPER CANADA JULY 29TH 1804.

Sir,

I will undertake to deliver into His Majesty's Stores at Amherstburg the undermentioned provisions at the prices thereunto annexed and will guarantee the same to keep Sound Twelve Months after delivery, viz:

*A letter from Nichol to Askin, dated 11 August, 1804, is printed in "Papers and Records," XX, 63-4.

Three Hundred Barrels fine flour 196 lbs each
at 30/ Canada Currency p. Barrel.
Fifty Barrels Prime Mess Pork at 100/ Canada Currency
p. Barrel.

ROBT. NICHOL.

John Craigie
Depy. Commy Genl.
Quebec.

(C 109, p. 45.)

FROM JOHN ASKIN TO ROBERT NICHOL

AUGUST THE 26 1804.

Dear Robert

When I received your letter of the 28th July & August 3 I was indisposed so that I could only drop you a few lines. I'm thank God perfectly recovered therefore will answer more fully, your speedy and safe passage with your finding your business during your absence conducted so much to your liking are circumstances that gives me much pleasure as does everything that may tend to your advantage, respecting flour I have not sold any and I have therefore taken what came up for my own use with some Pork in lieu of what I wrote for. Mr. Innis gives his for 7 Dollars and I can't say if he sells much, this is sinking 2/ as the freight is 10/ from Fort Erie what you sent by the Cale* you may therefore charge at 50/ and that by the Saguinah at 40/ as I pay the freight of the latter. the Pork that I take for my own use at first cost and charges, but what is gone to Michilimackinac on our joint account for what it sells for and every penny I receive shall be remitted you, respecting the payment of what I have taken for my own use of Flour & Pork I'm very sorry to say I cannot with any kind of certainty say when the amount will be remitted, however you may depend on it as soon as in my power. I too well know the consequence of a young beginner being disappointed in their remittances. When I ordered the Flour and Pork for myself I had every reason to expect a payment of 1000 Dollars for a note due me at the Post so early as may last, of this I have not got a penny but still hope I shall before the close of the summer. Should that be the case I will loose no time in sending the Balance of our account & indeed I do not know of any fund from which I expect unless some person should come forward to purchase Land which is seldom the case for Cash. if you should have any freight in the Saguinah of course so much will be returned by you. Inclosed I send you Mr. Reynold's draft on Mr. Craigie for £9.3.1. Hallifax to pay for the Tea you ordered for I must not remain in your Debt. Your proposition for obtaining freight for the Saguinah is a fair One and I don't think you should relinquish it, you know I only hold 1/3 in her. I rec'd Mr. Clark's acknowledgement of having received £30 N.Y. Currency from you, & have debited him with the same. You know I'm no politician therefore on that Head dont expect to hear from me. I however fear that trouble is near us. Our letters from Home are from Capt. & Mrs. Meredith they are in Quarters at Portsmouth in good health as well as their Children.

*Probably the Caledonia.

I forgot when here to say anything to you respecting Norton. I wish land or anything could be got from him & given to Mr. Hamilton to whom I owe £100 & is so modest as never to mention it, tho' it has laid Over for some years.

I shall only add that may Health & happiness ever attend you is the sincere wish of my Family as well as that of him who is

Dear Robert

truly Yours.

(Unsigned.)

Mr. Robert Nichol

Merchant

Queenston

Fort Erie.*

(Askin Papers, Vol. I.)

MEMORANDUM FROM JOHN ASKIN, SENIOR, TO
CAPTAIN RUFF, VIZT

To sell if he can for Cash or a Good Draft twenty seven Barrells of Whisky containing 938½ Galls which was filled up in June last for 9/ Cy Pr. Gall and 10/ for the barrell, likewise 60 Bushels of Corn in 30 bags for 16/ the bushell and no charge for the Bags.

There are a small Firkin and a Crock of butter if no better can be done sell it for 2/ Cy Pr. lb the price here, the Crock to be brought back, but the firkin to be sold for 6/ or 8/. In Order to have a payment of the whole this fall I would give the Whisky and Corn for £400 N.Y. Currency as it stands Baggs Casks & all and that is not 5/6 per Gallon here, for the Duty & Freight is above 2/6 per Gallon.

There are likewise 14 Barrells of Pork belonging to Mr. Robert Nichol and as he is desirous to [have] them turned into Cash, if no better can be done give the whole at £10 per Barrell but not by the single Barrell under £11.

Near Sandwich September 22d 1804.

(Askin Papers, Vol. I.)

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

My Dear Sir

My Clerk having at length this day arrived—I am enabled to send by Capt. Cowan your watch—which however appears to me to gain time—

from the hurry I am in Captn Cowan just getting under way and not having a package handy I send forward by him only 4 lbs of your Tea the remainder say 26 lbs. shall be sent by Mills†—I hope it may turn out good it Cost in New York 72 Cents Pr. lb. An Acc't of the whole will be forwarded hereafter—Mean time I am most Sincerely

Your friend

Novr. 7 1804.

ROBT. NICHOL.

*For letters from Nichol to Askin, dated August 26, September 6, 18 and 24, October 19, November 3 and 9, and December 14, 1804; March 5, July 20 and August 27, 1805, see "Papers and Records," XX, pp. 64-71.

†Probably Captain William Mills, master of a merchant ship. In 1804, he was master of the *Nancy*, see "Simcoe Papers," II, 387.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

John Askin Esqr.

FORT ERIE, MAY 19, 1804.

Dear Sir

I on the 10th instant received your two letters of the 3rd & 24th Ultro.—† the first advising of a drft for £40 favor of Mr. Meldrum—the last inclosing Sundry Accounts—the drft although extremely inconvenient to me I paid for your honor—

In business between Merchants it is always necessary to be Explicit & Candid—by which means Mistakes & Misapprehensions are Avoided—this I shall endeavour to be in the Strictures & remarks I have found it necessary to make on the Accounts received—& shall begin with that of the Saguinah—

You may recollect that on the 28th Novemr. 1804 *You* (not the owners) wrote me in the following words—“Should you want the Saguinah Early you may depend on her being ready—however the Sooner I know the better—The freight in her would be a Commodious way for *me* to pay the Balance due *you with Interest.*”—In my answer dated the 15th Decr. following—which is addressed to *you* not the Owners, I say “With respect to the Saguinah, I have to make *You* an Offer”—These words from both most Clearly Express & certainly imply in the Strongest Manner—that with you alone I could have any thing to do in the business—would any Man in his Senses—Suppose that I would become responsible to pay £500—take upon myself the risk of freight &c., &c. for the prospect of getting £83 or £85 placed to the Credit of an Old Debt—which Debt too was a good one—the Idea is Absurd—Admitting for the Sake of Argument (and I will not Admit it in Any Other Way) that I was bound to Account to the Owners in equal proportions—would not your 1/3rd of £529.4. be upwards of £176—are you to draw orders on me for your Private & other Purposes & then on a Settlement with Each other Make me Debtor to the Other Owners for so much as may be due from the Vessel to them—In all My transactions respecting this Charter party I knew No body but you, with you were My Accounts kept, to you were all references Made, through you was all the business transacted, & with you Alone must it be all settled—Captn. Fearson & not me is wrong respecting the freight Charged him the Amount being taken from his own book—When I Chartered the Saguinah I did it from a desire to Serve you and to Enable you to pay the large balance you Owed me and which as a young beginner it was very detrimental to me to lay out of—I could have no other Motive—the Idea of profit was Absurd—I knew from the bad Name of the Vessel—from the want of freight influence in her Owners—& from the great Competition—that she would have very little Chance of being employed—I therefore having some Patronage & influence with My friends took her on myself, the Consequence was a loss of upwards of £70—

The Credit for demurrage is Exactly the Amount which you say the Owners have agreed to Charge—

In your Account Current the first Charge £14.8 must be deducted also the £32.17.2 Charges as due Charles & James—for the first Sum I gave you Credit with Mr. Hamilton at the time I drew the drft—and on Account of the last I on the 12th Augst. 1804 Paid by your order £30.0.0 to Mr. Clark—In this Country Provisions are always as Cash—the Prices at which the Articles furnished the

†These have not been found.

Surprize are Charged—were My Cash prices—I was selling them Every day for that—and you Cannot reasonably Expect me to give you Cash or Cash Articles on a Credit of 12 Months—

I come Now to the provision Account which is entirely Wrong—I am at a loss to Conceive on what principle of Accountantship you Charge me with my half of the proceeds of 5 Barrels Sugar—as your Account Stands you get 7 Barrels Pork for £19.8.9 a price at which I should like to purchase 5 or 6 Hundred to speak Seriously the Sugar was my own not yours to Charge you received it for my half of 5 Barrels Pork sold—the Charge for Commission I object to—Your proportion of profits was the Compensation for Sales—if I pay Commission I must have the whole profit—The Pork on hand I wish to get sold—Captn Gilkison has promised to do his Endeavours for me—I will thank you to give him an order for it—also to receive the £18—due in Sept. for which I suppose a drft then due will be given—

A Statement of Accounts between us is inclosed—by which it appears you Owe me a Balance of £46.6.11 New York Currency this is a large Sum for me to lie without & I shall be glad of a Remittance on Account of it so Soon as Convenient—Justice to my reputation & a regard to the Interests of my Creditors require me to make every exertion to remit to them their demands and Oblige me to say I can Accept no more of your drfts without you Provide me with funds to take them up—You know well from Experience—how difficult it is for a Merchant to raise Money in this Country to Pay up his own Engagements I am very sorry for Captn. Fearsons situation & also for the inconveniences which you have Suffered—and was I a Monied Man would do any thing in my Power to Serve you both but if I would Avoid a Similar fate I must before I become generous be just—Nothing Operates as a warning to others better than Example—Examples in this Country have not been Wanting & I must endeavour to profit by those I have seen—I know the fatal Effects of Allowing interest Accounts to Accumulate and am determined that nothing shall induce me to Apply Moneys due my Creditors to Other purposes—

I have thus Candidly Stated to you my Sentiments & lament the Necessity which Called for it. I am but a young Man and a Still Younger Merchant but I have learnt by Experience that the only way to have the Power of Serving Others is to begin by Serving Myself—I am Dear Sir

Your Sincere friend
& Humble Servant
ROBT. NICHOL.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

John Askin Esqr.
Sir,

FORT ERIE AUGUST 31—1806.

I have now before me a very extraordinary letter which I some days ago received from you—and must confess that from yours of the 9th June I was led to expect something very different—As it is not at all (what you said it would be) a full answer to Mine of the 19th May*—I shall without a particular reference to the very Elaborate remarks made by you on Mine of the

*See "Papers and Records," XX, 72, for Nichol to Askin, 13 July, 1806.

19th May—take notice of the deficiencies and add such other remarks as may present themselves on the transactions between us—

All the professions I ever made you were (I hope you will Admit) punctually fulfilled, that punctuality however Appears only to have encouraged you to make additional demands on my Stock of Good Nature—Your own good Sense should have told you what was well known that I was but a young beginner with but a Slender Capital—and with that knowledge your delicacy should have prevented you from Asking me for any thing—the granting of which might hurt my Credit with my Montreal Correspondents—or the refusal have hurt my own feelings—The only thing which you Appear to have Consulted in this business was your own Conveniency—with this conviction on my Mind—I should have been wanting to my own Interest as well as to that of those who have placed Confidence in my Exertions had I acted otherwise than I did—

You say “were your letters to me & my own ever published—no person would be more hurt than myself at the unbecoming Contrast”—I possibly might be hurt but it would be at your indelicacy in Asking what you must have known it was impossible & improper for me to grant—I have to say further on that Subject that if such is your wish I have no Objection to every letter which has passed between us either on this or any other Subject being published—I have no fears that the publishing them will injure me in the Opinion of my own Correspondents or the World in general—

“Falling in a Mans Debt & not being always able to pay when due” is not Certainly a Breach of Friendship—but with a knowledge of that inability to encrease it in a three fold proportion—with a knowledge also of the poverty of the Creditor is not I conceive according to English Customs altogether Correct and it is equally incorrect for the imprudent Debtor when he finds his request cannot be Complied with, to rail at the prudent Creditor from whom by his own confession he has received favors—

I am Come now to that part of your letter wherein you say—“That it happens with you as you’re sure it does with me and all others in Trade that what we think we can do at one time we afterwards find we cannot do—is not this an Additional reason for refusing your request? You say some of my remarks relative to our Account are right & others not. I should have been better pleased had you pointed out those remarks that were erroneous instead of merely saying that there were Such—the Balance due me by you according to my Account, and which to the best of my knowledge is Correct Amounts to £46.6.11 besides Interest N.Y. Cy. independent of this you have in your possession property of mine to the value of upwards of £50 York. as it is a principal Object with me to *perform my Engagements* I will thank you to pay Mr. Gillespie whatever Sums you Can spare on either of these Accounts & to furnish him with such information relative to the Pork business as will enable me to judge what will be the total amount of my *loss*—It is not my wish to increase Misunderstandings but it is my wish to render justice to all those who have Claims on me for it—& the only way to do this is not to delegate the Settlement of Accounts to Strangers totally unacquainted with the business—

the principals should Mutually Explain whatever requires explanation—and this from the distance between you & me Can only be done by letter.*

I wish you well & am Sir
Your Humble Servant

ROBT. NICHOL.

P.S. the Acc't is inclosed as
Am't due Sept. 10th £47.5.5.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO BRIGADIER GENERAL BROCK

NIAGARA MAY 21—1808.

My Dear Sir

Conceiving that in the present critical State of our Affairs with the United States, it might be desirable for His Excellency the Commander in Chief to have early and correct information of any Movement of the American Troops on our Frontiers—I have conceived it to be my duty to State to you that I have received intelligence that can be depended upon that strong reinforcements of Troops of the line have been ordered from the interior of the United States to the Posts of Detroit & Michilimackinac, and that a detachment of these amounting to upwards of a hundred Men has already Arrived at Presqu'isle on Lake Erie—I have Conversed with the Captain of the Vessel Chartered to Carry them up—My reasons for being so forward to report this to you is that the sudden Collection of a large force at the present time in those places might very Materially affect our intercourse with the Indian Nations and dispose them to Commit hostilities on our distant Settlements before we could afford them the necessary protection—While writing a most unpleasant circumstance has taken place which is I think strong evidence of the hostile intentions of the United States—

Twenty Boats belonging to the North West and South West Companies—Navigating Lake Ontario under the faith of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce—were this Morning fired upon by the American Garrison and Seventeen of the Twenty Captured—the remaining three Made their Escape to this Side—it is unnecessary for me to say More on this Subject as I presume a correct Statement of the fact will be forwarded to the proper Authorities—

I write in great haste the vessel being just on the point of Sailing.

I am with much respect &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

Brigr. General Brock
&c., &c., &c.
Montreal.

(C 363, pp. 61-3.)

*Askin's letter which provoked this reply has not been found. The correspondence seems to have then terminated, but see "Papers and Records," XX, p. 73, for an extract of a letter from Charles Askin to his father, dated at Queenston, 1 August, 1811, respecting the settlement of their accounts.

NICHOL'S ELECTORAL ADDRESS

To the ELECTORS for the County of NORFOLK.

GENTLEMEN,

ENCOURAGED by the promise of active Support from a number of respectable Voters of the County, I offer myself as a Candidate for the honour of Representing you in the next Provincial Parliament.

In coming forward on this occasion, I feel seriously impressed with the awful Responsibility which he must incur, who may have the good fortune to become the object of your choice.—Yet, Gentlemen, should I be Elected, (trusting to your Candour and liberal intelligence) I shall on all occasions, with a steady undeviating aim, pursue the great objects of my Election, your Public Happiness.—And I trust that my honest and zealous Exertions to serve you, will have every success—and that in the satisfaction of my Constituents, I shall reap the only reward that I desire.

I am averse to making many promises as to what I will do if elected; first, because it may not be in my power to fulfill them, and second, because it is impossible to foresee what may be necessary. But I will tell you what I will not do—I will never abandon the cause nor the rights and interests of my Constituents, but on the contrary, will at all times honorably, faithfully and manfully contend in their defence against ALL attempts (from whatever quarter) to destroy them—and will on all occasions, zealously bring forward and strenuously support such measures as may conduce to the wealth and happiness of the District of London.

GENTLEMEN,

I do not think that it is any recommendation of myself to speak disrespectfully of the other Candidates who have offered themselves for your Suffrages—God only knows the heart, and I hope that their motives and intentions are pure. You are not strangers to any of us; and I sincerely and earnestly wish (let the lot fall on whom it may) that he whom the people delight to honor, may fully answer their expectations, and procure for this district a full measure of public prosperity.*

ROBT. NICHOL.

Woodhouse, March 25, 1812.

(Photo-stat in Dominion Archives from original hand bill in possession of the Norfolk Historical Society, Simcoe, Ont.)

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO JOHN ASKIN

Lieut. Colonel Nichol has the honor to Acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Askins Note of the 31st August which only came to hand this day—

Assuring Mr. Askin that every Attention shall be paid to its contents the Lieut. Colonel begs leave to suggest that the Patents having been Registered in the proper Office in the United States—any interference of the British Government at this time or hereafter to invalidate them would be of no avail†—

*See J. H. Coyne, Talbot Papers, I, 142, for a letter from Henry Bostwick to Nichol, 31 March, 1812.

†Probably referring to a purchase of lands from the Indians by Askin and others, which the government of the United States had refused to recognise. See "Simcoe Papers," IV, 99, 211.

Lieut. Colonel Nichol intended to have paid his respects to Mr. Askin & family had time permitted

Sunday Sept. 6

1812.

John Askin Esqr.

Strabane.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO E. B. BRENTON

HEAD QUARTERS—CENTRE DIVISION

AUGUST 6TH 1813—

Sir

I have the honor to enclose a Memorial which I am to beg the favor of you to Submit to His Excellency the Commander of the Forces.

It is with much regret that I trouble His Excellency on this Subject, but His Honor Major General De Rottenburg does not wish to interfere in matters which occurred so long previous to his Assuming the Command here—

It will appear strange to His Excellency—but it is an absolute fact that Since the Commencement of hostilities I have received neither Pay nor Military allowances although I have been Constantly employed on the Most Active Service—& that the Money I have received—amounting to £350—has been at different Periods on My very urgent Solicitations Advanced to me by way of Imprest and on Account.

Had Major General Brock been alive when I last arrived from Lower Canada in November the System of Pay & Allowances for the Militia Staff, which the Critical Situation of the Province & the Active Operations in which he was engaged, prevented his attending to—was to have been Completely Arranged—

It is not my wish to talk of my Services having done nothing but what my duty required but I hope I may be permitted to say—that for Activity, danger & Usefulness—they have not been exceeded by any Officer in His Majesty's Regular Army serving here—

My Private Sacrifices have been great—having been Robbed and Plundered by the Enemy *Even before the declaration of War*—& my business has been Completely ruined from my having been for so long a Period withdrawn from it—I therefore trust that My Memorial will not appear unreasonable—& that as my Services have been equal—I shall, as far as the payment of my Allowances goes, be placed on the same footing with the Regular Troops.

I have the honor to remain &c.

ROBT. NICHOL LT. COLO.

Qr. M. Genl Militia.

E. Brenton Esqr.

Private Secretary.

(C. 703, pp. 121-3.)

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO NOAH FREER

MR. ADDISONS NEAR FOUR MILE CREEK

SEPT. 11, 1813—

Sir

In the Memorial which I did myself the honor of Addressing to His Excellency Sir George Prevost—I detailed the variety of Military Services which I had been Called upon to perform & which had necessarily obliged me to keep more horses than were allowed to me as Quarter Master General of Militia—and I understood from His Excellency himself that he was pleased to think favorably of My Claims. Major General De Rottenburg however did not understand it in that light—and will only Authorise forage for two Horses—the allowance to the Quarter Master General of Militia While Depy Assistants in the Line—Whose duty by the bye I have done—in Addition to my own have been Allowed three—I have kept the greatest part of the time—four Horses & considering the Multifarious & active duties in which I have been engaged—I am persuaded His Excellency will not think that too many—It is besides a Rule of the service that any person appointed to *Act* in any Staff situation is entitled to the allowances of that situation & therefore I hope His Excellency will be pleased to issue an order Authorising me to receive the full allowance for the Horses I have kept.

Lt. Colo. Coffin *Provincial* Aide de Camp Claims three Horses—by the orders I have seen He is only entitled to one—pray how many are allowed a provincial Aide de Camp in Lower Canada.—

I have the honor to be &c.

ROBT. NICHOL LT. COLO.

Qr. M. Genl Militia.

Upper Canada.

Noah Freer Esq.

(C 703, pp. 132-4.)

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO WILLIAM BROCK

YORK MARCH 17, 1815.

Sir

This will inform you that the Legislature of Upper Canada at its last Session appropriated the Sum of a Thousand Pounds Currency or Nine Hundred Pounds Sterling for the erection of a Monument to the Memory of the late President Major General Sir Isaac Brock and that a Mr. Dickson, Colo. Clark (now in England) and Myself are the Commissioners for Carrying the provisions of the Act into effect—The whole amount which will probably be increased by the rate of Exchange will be remitted to the House of Messrs. Gillespie, Gerrard & Co. of London—and in the mean time the Commissioners are desirous of receiving your friendly assistance in procuring a design and Estimate of the Expence—It is their desire that the Monument should do perfect justice to the Character of the late lamented General both with respect to his Civil Administration and Military Command—One which shall Convey to Posterity, with the fame of his great actions—the Estimation in which he was held by all ranks in this Province—Their Gratitude for his distinguished Services and Sorrow for his untimely fall—It is also their wish that the inscription

should resemble his own Character—dignified, Simple & unostentatious, and be in the English Language.

It is by no Means the intention of the Commissioners to Confine themselves to the limited Sum expressed in the Grant as there are numerous personal friends of the late Sir Isaac who are desirous of Contributing to this laudable Work and it would be hard to deprive them of this Opportunity of testifying their respect for his Memory—I am therefore to desire that the Monument be designed on a *respectable* Scale—*Magnificent* I fear we cannot make tho Comparatively Speaking it may be so.

The Idea that has struck Mr. Dickson and Myself is that there should be a Statue of the General on the top of a Monumental Column with appropriate Ornaments and Inscriptions on the pedestal—

Should Lieut. Colo. Clark be still in England—He will of Course see you and be Consulted. He is so well acquainted with our Sentiments on every Subject Connected with the late Major General Sir Isaac Brock—knows so well those of the whole Province—And we are so well acquainted with his—that the other Commissioners have no hesitation in Saying that his Ideas May be considered as their own.

I beg to hear from you in time to Communicate your Answer to the House of Assembly at its Next Session and have the honour to be with sincere respect*

Sir,

ROBT. NICHOL.

(From a copy in Nichol's handwriting attached to the report of the Commissioners, dated December 1st, 1821.)

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO WILLIAM HALTON

WOODHOUSE JANY. 13—1816

Dear Sir,

Having learned since my arrival here that a Certain Reuben Green had lately been at the Seat of Government to obtain as an U.E. Grants of land for several of his Children—I beg to mention for His Excellency's information that the family of the said Reuben Green with the exception of his son John, behaved during the late War in such a manner as to render [them] totally unworthy of the bounty of the Government—his son Elisha joined the Enemy early in the War—& was one of the Gang of Plunderers that infested the Country between Fort Erie and Dover, his daughter—whom I understood has received a Grant was Married to the noted *Dickson* who Murdered Captn. Francis† & who was shot at Sugar Loaf & for whom General Drummond offered a reward of Five Hundred Dollars—Dickson there is no doubt was frequently Concealed in Greens own house—there are other facts Connected with the Green Family too numerous to detail which if required can be stated. My object is merely to apprise His Excellency that

*Sir Richard Westmacott, the most distinguished English sculptor of the time, was consulted by members of General Brock's family, but the estimated cost of a suitable statue was much beyond the sum at the disposal of the committee.

†See Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1814, pp. 275-6, 278, 280, 289, 315, 317-8-9.

there are such Characters in this Country—whom he may perhaps consider as having forfeited all Claim to the Royal Bounty for former Services

I am &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

(Sundries U.C. 1816.)

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO WILLIAM HALTON

YORK, FEBY. 2, 1816

Dear Sir

The Bearer Mr. George Ryerse (not Ryerson) is the eldest son of the late Colonel Ryerse of Woodhouse in the London District—He is petitioning for land—and is desirous of obtaining a favorable location. I may say with perfect truth in his behalf—That he is a well behaved young Man—that he has been a great sufferer by the War—his Mills & other property having been destroyed by the Enemy†—& that his Widowed Mother is now supported by his *Exertions*. I think His Excellency will not hereafter regret having shewn him any favor which he may now be inclined to bestow.

I remain &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

Major Halton.

(Sundries U.C. 1816.)

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO WILLIAM HALTON

YORK, FEBY. 15, 1816.

Dear Sir,

The Bearer, a Mr. [George] Miller, commanded a Merchant Vessel at the Commencement of the late War and was in the Month of October or November 1812—taken by Commodore Chauncey's Squadron & carried into Sackett's Harbour—where all his personal property was taken from him—He was afterwards employed as a Pilot on board His Majesty's Squadron on the lake—and was engaged in every Action that took place—He piloted the Boats under Captn. Dobbs—when He Boarded & carried the Enemy's Armed Schooners Moored under the Guns of Fort Erie—on which occasion—He Conducted himself in such a Manner as to be Most particularly Mentioned in Captn. Dobbs's publick letter—& also so as to receive the thanks of that officer—He has since been dismissed from the service being no longer required—& from being a Provincial—without any provision—He is a man of good Character and as Such I beg leave to recommend him most respectfully for any favor His Excellency May be disposed to grant him.

I have the honor to be &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

Major Halton.

(Sundries, U.C. 1816.)

†Ibid, 15, 16, 331.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO WILLIAM HALTON

YORK, FEBY. 26, 1816.

Sir

Having been applied to by a Mrs. [Hannah] Frey of the Niagara District, to state her Case to His Excellency the Lt. Governor—I beg leave to observe—That her late Husband Captn. Barnard Frey—was on duty at Niagara on the 20th November 1812—as a Volunteer—& was on that occasion killed by a shot from the Enemy's Batteries.

Captn. Frey was on the half pay of the late Corps of Butlers Rangers and was a very loyal & zealous subject—The following year when the Enemy got possession of the Country, Mrs. Frey was on a Charge of Sending intelligence to the British Army, taken Prisoner & sent to the States—& when the British Army at a subsequent period advanced to the four Mile Creek—it encamped on her farm—having destroyed her Fences and Cut and destroyed her Meadows & Fields for the purpose of entrenching themselves by which she sustained great injury.

Mrs. Frey conceives that on a representation of her Case to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent—He will be graciously pleased to order her a pension agreeably to the Scale for officers Widows—hopes that His Excellency will be pleased to interfere in her behalf. I have the honour to be &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

Wm. Halton, Esq. Sec'y. &c.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO WILLIAM HALTON

YORK, APRIL 6—1816.

Sir,

Having been requested by Mr. Justice Powell—to transmit the Names of persons to Act as Commissioners for carrying into effect the Act for Amending and repairing the Publick High Ways—in the London & Western Districts I beg to Subjoin a list of persons whom I would propose to fill those appointments—

London District—Great Road—Myself.

 } Mahlon Burwell—

By Roads— } Matthias Steel—

Western District—Robt. Richardson Esqr.

By Roads— Wm. McCormick.

it may appear odd that I should recommend myself—but the fact is Mr. Justice Powell—pressed it on me and—I consented to act—I therefore hope His Excellency will not ascribe—this Nomination to any presumption in me.

Mr. Steel—was one [of] my Clerks is now in business for himself as a Merchant—is active & I consider myself perfectly responsible for his good Conduct—Mr. Burwell is known to His Excellency.

I am &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

Wm. Halton, Esq.
Secy.

(Sundries, U.C. 1816.)

APRIL 6—1816.

Dear Sir

The Bearer—Serjt. Mackintosh a very old faithful Servant of the King has an order for 300 Acres of land—He is anxious to settle in Bayham—That Township is under the *Care* of Colonel Talbot & myself as Commissioners & is intended exclusively for Actual settlers—who have settling duties to perform—this Man is poor—& hopes His Excellency will not exact rigidly the settling duties—but allow him to locate at once—He has been a great sufferer by the War—& I would consider it a personal favor if His Excellency will give him the indulgence, He wishes, which is an order to the Surveyor General to give him a location on or Near Otter Creek.

I am &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

Major Halton.

(Ibid.)

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO LIEUT. COLONEL COFFIN.

YORK APRIL 14TH 1816.

Sir,

Having seen a letter from London in which it is stated that Major J. B. Glegg—Aide de Camp—to the late Major Genl. Sir Isaac Brock—was to receive a Medal for the Concern he had in the Reduction of Detroit—I Consider myself in duty bound to transmit a Return of two meritorious officers (one of whom has been since killed in Action—at Queenstown) who acted as Provincial Aides de Camp—to the Major General on this occasion.—One of them was Selected by the Major General to draw up the Articles of Capitulation and to Negotiate for the Surrender of the place & the other was most usefully Employed—from his knowledge of the Indian Language—in Conveying the General's wishes to that part of our force—I request you to lay the return & this letter before His Excellency the Lt. Governor & have the honor to be &c.

ROBT. NICHOL LT. COLO.

Qr. M. Genl. Militia.

Supplementary Return of Officers Employed at the Reduction of Detroit—
Augt. 14th 1812.—

Provincial	Lt. Col. John McDonell
Aides De Camp	Major James Givins

YORK APRIL 16—1816.

ROBT. NICHOL LT. COLO.

Qr. M. Genl. Militia.

(M.D. 39.)

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, LONDON DISTRICT

Report of the Board of Education appointed by His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor in and for the London District in Conformity to the Statute in that case made and provided.

—Present—

Robert Nichol Esquire, Chairman.	
John Backhouse Esqr	} Members
Thomas Cummings Esquire	
Mahlon Burwell Esqr.	

—Absent—

Henry Bostwick Esqr—deceased.

The Board having met at Woodhouse on the thirty first day of December 1817 after having taken into consideration the reports from the several common Schools, under their Control and compared them with our observations, have the honor to report for the information of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor—That immediately after the promulgation of the Act in the London District the Inhabitants in several of the Townships thereof met and made choice of Trustees to Superintend the Schools within their respective limits—in General those Trustees were Selected from Among the most intelligent and respectable of the community—both as to their Moral Character and fitness in other respects for the Situations to which they were appointed.

They immediately proceeded to regulate the Schools within their respective divisions, and were fortunate enough to procure proper Characters to be employed as Teachers—The Board having had no cause to regret any that were reported to them.—

The Board at an Early period—that they might Conform to the Spirit of the Act respecting one Uniform System of Education—deemed it proper to direct their attention to the Books in the several Schools under their Control—and finding it impracticable to procure Books of the same kind for the numerous Scholars within the District decided on placing the Sum authorised to be applied to the procuring of Books—in the hands of the Honorable and Rev'd Dr. Strachan who had offered his gratuitous services for that purpose—and with whose zeal and anxiety for the attainment of the important ends contemplated by the Act the Board were well acquainted they therefore look forward (through his intervention) to being able in the Course of the ensuing Summer to supply the several Schools within the London District with Elementary and other Books which while they will facilitate the Education of the Youth of the District will improve their Morals and at the same time foster those principles of attachment to our parent state, so conducive to their future happiness, and which the Members of the Board have always considered as one of the first objects of their Care.—

They regret that during the first year of their Superintendancy, they have been from Necessity compelled to admit of Books being made use of—which they could not under other circumstances have allowed—they allude to Websters Works, but they have endeavoured all in their power to restrain them and the Trustees have been Notified that they will not on any account be tolerated in future years.—

Since the Act has gone into operation the number of Schools in the London District has been considerably increased—and Parents have been induced to pay more attention than heretofore to the regular attendance of their Children at School—The Number of Schools that have been reported to the Board

amounts to Nineteen in which nearly Six Hundred Scholars are taught, and the Board have been informed that there are others which not having been reported agreeably to the Provision of the Act, could not receive their Sanction or be entitled to any of the Advantages—Authorized by the Act.—

The Act itself has given universal Satisfaction in the London District and is justly regarded by the Inhabitants as a proof of the attention paid by the Executive Government and the Legislature to their real interests.

All of which is by order of the board most Humbly Submitted.

ROBT. NICHOL

Chairman.

(Sundries, U.C. 1817.)

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, LONDON DISTRICT

The Board of Education for the London District, having met pursuant to the Statute in that Case made and provided, have the Honor to report for the information of

HIS HONOR the PRESIDENT.

That with few exceptions the Trustees that were formerly Chosen, have been continued in the Several Townships throughout the District, and that where Vacancies have occurred by removals or other Causes, they have invariably been filled by individuals selected from among the most respectable part of the Community and in General the Board have every reason to be satisfied with the local arrangements made by the Trustees, and with the persons employed by them as Teachers.

The Board have pleasure in being able to state, that since their last reports there has been a considerable Accession to the Number of scholars within the District, and they have remarked with satisfaction, that in General seem inclined to avail themselves of the encouragement held out to them by the Legislature. The facilities for instruction afforded by the Act now in operation, seem to have diffused a spirit of emulation, that cannot fail to be productive of the most beneficial consequences to the Community.

The number of Scholars now reported amounts to Six Hundred, being an increase of One Hundred within the last twelve months. Such an increase affords the most ample proof and consolatory evidence of the good effects produced by the interference of the Legislature in a point of such Vital importance to the Country; and it becomes a pleasing part of the duty of the Board to call your Honors attention to this rapid improvement in the Education of the rising generation.

The Board have not restricted their attention to the mere receiving of official reports from the Trustees, on the contrary they conceive that their duty required from them a strict scrutiny and close examination into the State of the Schools throughout the District, and accordingly some of their Members accompanied by intelligent individuals have personally visited the different schools reported to them, for the purpose of ascertaining the Numbers and state of proficiency of the scholars, and they can state with confidence that they are generally in a state of progressive improvement, and in some instances much beyond what they anticipated.

In one or two instances only had they occasion to be displeased with the mode of instruction pursued, and in those instances they have not failed to state to the Trustees the necessity of dismissing the Teachers and employing others more likely to give satisfaction.

The Books used in many of the schools from causes stated in a former report, were not such as to meet the approbation of the Board; but this temporary inconvenience is now completely removed, by the arrival of the Books which were commissioned from England, and which being now in the course of distribution, the Board anticipate will have the effect of assimilating into one System, the mode of instruction throughout the Province.

All of which is by Order of the Board Most Respectfully Submitted to your Honors Consideration—

Jno. Backhouse,* Chairman pro tem of the
Board of Education of the London District.

Walsingham 18th June
1818. }

MEMORIAL FROM ROBERT NICHOL

To His Excellency Sir Peregrine Maitland, Knight Commander of the Most Honorable Military Order of the Bath—Lieut. Governor of the Province of Upper Canada and Major General Commanding His Majesty's Forces in the said Province, &c., &c., &c.

The Memorial of Robert Nichol—Lt. Colo. & Q.M. General of the Provincial Militia most respectfully Sheweth

That by a Militia General Order of the 26th December 1814 your Memorialist was Nominated a Member of a Board for the investigation of Militia Claims—and was on the 15th March 1815—after the Militia of the Province had been disembodied—Specially ordered to Kingston on this duty—

That he was Subjected to heavy disbursements for Postages on Claims transmitted to him & for the Conveyance of the Same to Kingston, as well as for his travelling expences without having been provided with any fund from whence to meet the Same—

That by the Militia General orders of 27th March 1815 & 6th of January 1816 Twenty Shillings per diem of Pay were promised to the Officers composing the Board—

That your Memorialist was employed Ninety days on this Service & disbursed Forty Five pounds to enable him to Carry it on as will appear by the Contingent Account of the Board herewith transmitted—

That he has been recommended by the Board to be paid the Sum of One Hundred and Forty One Pounds Eight Shillings & Sixpence half penny for his Pay and disbursements—but has not as yet received any part thereof—

Wherefore your Memorialist hopes that your Excellency taking the premises into Consideration will direct a Warrant to be issued for the payment of that Sum to your Memorialist and as in duty bound He will ever pray.

ROBT. NICHOL, LT. COL.

York Feby 3—1819

*See "Papers and Records," Vol. XXIV, p. 22, and "Simcoe Papers," IV, pp. 67, 299, 313, 314, 316, 334.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL (UNADDRESSED.)

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY JUNE 23—1819

Dear Sir

You probably think that I have Neglected the Militia Bill—but I assure you if you think so you are Mistaken I have given the Subject my Most serious Consideration & have Made very Considerable progress in the draught of a Bill on that very important Subject—I however have not yet been able to reduce it to that form which would justify me in Submitting it for His Excellency's consideration—I have given up My intention of perfecting my plan, but it requires more leisure & abstraction from other business than I have in my power to bestow upon it during the actual Session—

In looking over the public Accounts I am sorry to Observe that our funds are very insufficient to meet the appropriations which we have authorised—And I fear that in the existing circumstances of the Province we cannot raise the Amount within the year by any New Tax we could devise—I am averse to breaking our faith with any person having an Authorised Claim upon us—and therefore think of proposing if it should not be Objected to by His Excellency—a Loan at legal interest—the House at the same time providing by New duties Funds for the payment of the principal by instalments & for the same annual payment of the Interest—the Sum to be borrowed will I fear be at least £12,000—

If this Mode should be objectionable you will of course fall upon some Mode of letting me know.*

There will not I believe be any debate upon the Supply—The Matter is to be discussed on Friday.

yours truly

ROBT. NICHOL.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO MAJOR HILLIER.

Major Hillier

WOODHOUSE

Private.

OCTR 19—1820

My Dear Sir

I write you on a subject which annoys me a good deal but which will I hope be remedied through you without an official application—It is this—

On the first settlement of Talbot Road I had the honor of being joined with Colo. Talbot as Commissioner—and had likewise the honor of all the drudgery—by an arrangement or understanding with the Executive Government—no petition could be entertained without the fees being deposited with the Commissioners or Receiver General at York. By Colo. Talbot's directions I received the fees—which were regularly paid over by me as they came into my hands—the last payment was at York to the late Mr. Selby—

The lands being subject to settlement duties, a Regulation was made that such persons as should forfeit their locations from non-performance of settlement should have their fees returned in Consequence of which the fees *paid in Conditionally* were carried to a *separate* Account. Mr. Selby's death happened in 1813—and the Books were transferred to Mr. McGill—What I complain of

*See "Papers and Records," Ontario Historical Society, pp. 62-3.

is that—illiterate persons going from the Talbot Road for their Patents Call at the Office and are told that the fees have not been paid—from their not being entered in the *General Account of fees* they then return to me publishing through the Country as they pass that I have retained the Money by which I am grossly Slandered & at the same time my feelings greatly excited—There have been several cases—one in particular the other day—I am perfectly aware that this is altogether without the privity or wish of any Member of the Government—but to put a stop to it I beg that a List May be made out from Mr. Selby's acct of all persons who have paid the fees on Grants on Talbot Road up to the 1st June 1813 at which time I declined acting to be hung up in the Council—Receiver General's Inspector General's & Surveyor General's Offices to which there may be a reference—& that the Clerks be instructed on application to ask whether the Grant is on the Talbot Road—which will relieve me from Censure & prevent much trouble to Individuals as well as to myself. I ask this with more Confidence having for nearly four years performed all the duties of a Commissioner gratuitously having had a great deal of trouble while Colonel Talbot received *all* the Credit—and while I for My part received nothing but blame—

I write in great haste for the Post—but am &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO MAJOR HILLIER.

FALLS OF NIAGARA

MAY 18—1821.

Sir

I have this day had the honor to receive your letter of the 5th instant Stating that you had been instructed by His Excellency the Lieut. Governor to ascertain from me how far it would be Convenient or agreeable to me to undertake the duties of a Commissioner under the Act of last Session of Parliament for the improvement of the Navigation of the Province and requesting an early reply to that Communication—

In Answer I beg leave to state that it is with the utmost regret that I feel myself compelled to decline the appointment—

With the view of relieving myself from some pecuniary embarrassments—I last Autumn Came under an engagement to the Executors* of the late Mr. Hamiltons Estate to assist in winding up and settling the affairs thereof and these are of so Complicated a Nature as to require every moment of my time—Under these Circumstances you will be Convinced that I have no option—When at York (after the prorogation) I in Conversation with the Attorney General expressed an Opinion that in the event of being thought of by His Excellency for the appointment I might find time for the discharge of the important duties required by the Act—but since My arrival here—and examining the Books & papers which I am engaged to arrange—I find it will be totally out of my power.

You will I hope do me the favor to submit to His Excellency the reasons which compel me—reluctantly to decline the appointment—and at the same time

*William Dickson, Thomas Dickson and Thomas Clark, see "Papers and Records," Vol. XXIII, p. 350.

to assure him that it will give me very great pleasure to Contribute by every means in my power to the success of a Measure which I have very much at heart—and which I am persuaded will be productive of permanent Advantage to the Interests of the Mother Country and to the Province—

I have the honor to remain &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

Major Hillier A.D.C.
& Secy. &c., &c.
York.

REPORT OF COMMISSIONERS ON THE MONUMENT TO SIR ISAAC BROCK

Report of the Commissioners appointed under the authority of an Act of the Parliament of Upper Canada passed in the 55th year of the reign [of] George 3d. entitled "An act to provide for the erection of a Monument to the Memory of the late President Major General Sir Isaac Brock."

To His Excellency Sir Peregrine Maitland
K.C.B. Lieutenant Governor of the Province
of Upper Canada and Major General Command-
ing His Majesty's Forces within the said
Province, &ca., &ca., &ca.

The undersigned Commissioners beg leave most respectfully to report to your Excellency, That on their first appointment they experienced much embarrassment from one of their members being absent from the province, and from the want of Artists or other competent persons to advise with on the spot; they were therefore constrained to have recourse to Great Britain for information; accordingly a letter of which a copy marked A, is annexed, was written to one of the brothers of the deceased Sir Isaac, and at the same time one of a similar tendency was written to Thomas Clark Esquire, which last, however arrived too late, as he was on his voyage to this country soon after the passing of the Act.

No answer having been received from Mr. Brock the undersigned again wrote to him, in December 1815 and requested his early notice of their Communication—but they did not hear from him on the subject till July 1817, when the papers marked B, C, D, E, F, G, were by another brother of the deceased Sir Isaac delivered to Thomas Dickson Esquire, one of the undersigned, at Queenston.

On the receipt of these papers, which for the first time gave them some idea of the inadequacy of the sum Granted—the undersigned were compelled to Pause—They at one time had resolved to open a subscription to defray the additional expence it might be found necessary to incur—in compleating the proposed Monument, on a scale and in a style corresponding with the exalted Character, and eminent Public services of the illustrious and distinguished Officer, whose Memory was thereby intended to be perpetuated; but on reconsidering the subject they were apprehensive, that as public commissioners acting under the solemn authority of a parliamentary enactment, it would be construed into an indelicate assumption of power, as well as a reflection on the Legislature of the Province, should they resort to an appeal to the private sympathies of the people for the means to give effect to a public act of the Government.

The undersigned preferred submitting to the personal Obloquy which they knew they would incur by delay, to the gratification they would have derived from being enabled from a fund, in every other respect so honorably raised, to erect a splendid Memorial of the very high public and private estimation in which the services of the deceased were held, by the Government and Inhabitants of the Province.

Having for the reasons above stated forborne from proposing a subscription, and having been deterred by the embarrassments of the Provincial Revenue from applying to the Legislature for additional means to enable them to complete in a suitable manner this interesting public work—The undersigned have hitherto postponed commencing it—For tho' the Fund which was at first One thousand pounds, has accumulated to Fifteen hundred—and tho the value of labour and materials has very considerably decreased, still the undersigned are of Opinion that their means are inadequate to the erection of such a Monument as would satisfy the expectations and grateful feelings of the Province, or do Justice to the Character and actions of the deceased.

The undersigned have no personal motives for delaying to a longer period the accomplishment of this work—They are preparing for an early Commencement during the ensuing season, and on a scale corresponding with their means—They have ascertained that durable materials are to be had in abundance in the immediate neighbourhood, and workmen may be obtained from Kingston and Montreal—And tho the undersigned would have been gratified to have had more ample funds for this undertaking; they hope by a faithful application of those at their disposal to raise a solid and durable, if not an elegant Monument of the Gratitude of the Province.—

Two plans have suggested themselves to the undersigned on which they have not yet decided—The first, a high Tower to be placed in a conspicuous situation, on the heights above Queenston, in which the remains of the late President and Major General might be securely deposited as in a Mausoleum—The Second a Monumental Column resembling that erected to the Memory of Lord Nelson in Montreal surmounted with a Funereal Urn, and whichever may be adopted, to be furnished with suitable inscriptions—

The first being a large and conspicuous object with a vault underneath would perhaps be deemed a more appropriate testimonial of the strong feeling of veneration for the memory of the deceased, entertained by the Government and Province, and if the means are sufficient will in all probability be preferred. Mr. Nichol, however, one of the undersigned, will have the honor of waiting upon your Excellency with this report, and will explain to your Excellency in their behalf how desirous they are to conform to the wishes of your Excellency respecting it—He takes with him the sketches sent out from England as an illustration of the Estimate referred to in this report—

All of which is most respectfully submitted—

Thomas Clark }
Robt. Nichol } Commrs.
Thomas Dickson]

Niagara Falls
Decmr. 1st 1821.

(The whole report is in Nichol's handwriting.)

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO MAJOR HILLIER

FALLS OF NIAGARA FEBY. 10—1822.

Dear Sir

I yesterday received a letter from Mr. Peter Robinson in which he mentions that on account of his intended voyage to England He had with his Excellency's permission resigned the appointment of a Commissioner for reporting on the internal Communications of the Province—and that he had stated to His Excellency his wish that I might be appointed to Succeed him—As this recommendation has arisen from a Conversation between Mr. Robinson, Mr. Gordon, and Myself on leaving York in which I gave them to understand that I would if appointed Act—I beg to explain to you the reasons which have induced me to Change my original intention of declining that I may not Appear to His Excellency to Act from levity or Caprice—

When I declined acting as a Commissioner I had entered into an Engagement with the Executors of Mr. Hamilton's Estate to settle the affairs thereof previous to a final division of the property among the Heirs—and I could not without their permission absent myself even for a day from the duties I had undertaken to perform—since that I have by perseverance put the accounts into such train that my *Constant* attendance may be dispensed with and have obtained permission from the Executors to give my assistance to the Commission—should His Excellency see fit to associate me with the Gentlemen already appointed—

In Offering my services at this time it is not from any wish to Obtrude myself on His Excellency's Notice—As I feel very diffident of My Ability to be useful—all I can say is that I have great Anxiety for the Success of the Work—and whether I am or am Not appointed will zealously Cooperate with whoever may be entrusted with the Management of it—

Believe me &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

P.S. I have received a private communication from a quarter of unquestionable Authority which leads me to doubt very Much the ability of Mr. Gill (the Engineer employed between the Lakes) for the service in which He is Employed—

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO MAJOR HILLIER

STAMFORD MARCH 2—1822.

Sir

I have this day had the honor to receive your letter of the 25th Ulto. Mentioning that His Excellency the Lt. Governor had been pleased to appoint me a Commissioner under the Act of the 2nd year of His present Majesty's Reign Chapter 2nd for improving the internal Navigation of the Province—& beg leave to Assure His Excellency through you that I shall to the best of My ability discharge the duties appertaining to that Appointment.

I have the honor to be &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

Major Hillier A.D.C.

&c.

York.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO MAJOR HILLIER

STAMFORD SEPTEMBER 24—1822.

Sir

Our Canal Survey is Nearly Completed—and I am happy to assure you that the result of our Summers Operations turns out Much More favorably than I had anticipated as you will see when the report is transmitted for His Excellency's information—the average depth of Cutting will not exceed four feet six inches for Seven feet Water—

The Surveyor & Engineer are preparing to plot the Survey and have requested me to Apply for Separate Maps of the Townships of Canborough, Caistor, Gainsborough, Grimsby, Saltfleet, Clinton, Lowth, Grantham, Pelham, Wainfleet, Humberstone, Crowland—& the Tract at the Mouth of the Grand River—It is desirable that these should be designated in Lots & Concessions & Shewing the Reserves—that in plotting it May be known to whom the Land—Crossed by the Survey belongs.

I hope that it may not be inconvenient to the Surveyor General to forward these—and at an early date—as in the Event of an Early Session of the House of Assembly it would be desirable that His Excellency should be in possession of the report plans & Estimates some time previous to its Meeting.

I have the honor to be &c.

ROBT. NICHOL
Commissioner.

Major Hillier.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO MAJOR HILLIER

Private
Dear Sir

STAMFORD SEPTEMBER 24—1822.

I enclose an Official letter requesting Maps for the Surveyors to plot their work—getting them from the Surveyor General will save both Money & time—The route is really a fine one—& the *Summit level* which is about 370 feet above the level of Lake Erie extends about twenty-six Miles—exclusive of the Feeder so we require no reservoir or any Extra work for supplying the Canal with water the whole length including Locks (of which there will be about Forty five) will be about Fifty Miles to Burlington Bay. We found a very favorable Situation for descending the Mountain—in the Neighbourhood of James Henry's—distant from the Niagara Frontier about 21 Miles—

The Surveyors were last night near the Forty—progressing to Burlington, where I have some expectations they will arrive next Saturday Night—& I am in hopes that the whole work will be Completed for our Report by about the Middle of October—And I do assure you that I shall very Cordially rejoice that My labours as Superintendant will be at an end—as it will Save me from Some Sour looks from a friend who Considers the whole business as folly & waste of time—Time will however Shew—

Mr. Harris Our Surveyor has been so attentive to our Affairs that he has neglected his own—having omitted to send forward his Certificate of the performance of his settling duties tho performed agreeably to order—in time—He hopes that He May not Suffer on that Account—

His Certificate is enclosed herewith may I beg of you to Send it to the Surveyor General or as the Case may be—Mr. Harris goes down by this trip of the Steam Boat to Survey & Sound the Channel of Lake St. Louis.

I am &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

We Cant get any double Elephant drawing paper to purchase but have sent for it. Could you borrow for us from the Surveyor Genl., six sheets which will return when ours arrives.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO MAJOR HILLIER

FALLS OF NIAGARA NOVEM. 8, 1822.

Sir

I had not till yesterday the honor to receive your letter of the 15th Ultio. stating that the Township Maps requested by me had been transmitted—with the Exception of the Tracts on the Grand River which were not known at the Office—

The plans alluded to have all come safe to hand also the drawing paper—for your attention to which I beg to return My thanks—

I apprehend there must be some mistake respecting the Tracts on the Grand River being unknown—as they have been regularly Granted by Patent from the Crown & must have been described by the Surveyor General before the Patent could issue—The Tracts I allude to—are those Granted to the late John Docksteder, The late Earl of Selkirk—(or I believe the late Secretary Jarvis was the Patentee) and the Tract recently Granted to the Honble William Dickson—perhaps these May still be obtained.

I have the honor to be &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

Major Hillier A.D.C.

& Sec'y &c., &c.
York.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO MAJOR HILLIER

STAMFORD MAY 16—1823.

Dear Sir

Having been informed that the Office of Clerk of the Peace in the Western District is Vacant and that an Application has been made for the appointment by Mr. Charles Askin—I conceive it an Act of duty to State that Mr. Askin's Conduct during *the whole* of the late War with the United States was Most Exemplary—that he tho a Captain in the Essex Militia being at the time at Niagara volunteered his Services as a Guide & without pay to accompany a detachment (ordered to Move towards Amherstburg), on the Thames under Major Chambers of the 41st—which was subsequently ordered to Long Point to quell a Mutiny of the Militia—from thence he Accompanied Major General Brock to Detroit—He was on every service that subsequently occurred and from his highly honorable Conduct and Integrity was Confidentially employed on the Commissariat—where his services were most valuable & efficient—Mr. James Coffin under whom he was particularly employed Could if present bear ample testimony to his merits—and I beg to assure you that this letter is written by me

without his solicitation or knowledge merely to do justice to a Meritorious Gentleman & to put the Lieut. Governor in possession of some facts which shew that he has some pretensions to be favorably Considered.*

I am &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO MAJOR HILLIER

MARCH 21—1823.

My Dear Sir

I enclose the Memorial altered I think for the better and I am to beg of you to Submit it as early as possible for His Excellency's Consideration—I am anxious to return home and it would gladden My own heart as well as those of My little family to return full handed—

Excuse my importunity and believe me &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

I have been requested to state to you what I know of the Services and Character of Mr. Kemp now under Sentence of death—He was Quarter Master Sergeant of the 41st Regiment & I had an Opportunity of seeing his Conduct on a Variety of occasions—He had the Charge of a Number of the Men who from the want of Artillery Men were trained as Additional Gunners—and was on Many occasions distinguished for his Bravery. He was an excellent Gunner —& was uniformly a well behaved Man.—

MEMORIAL OF ROBERT NICHOL

To His Excellency Sir Peregrine Maitland K.C.B. Lieut. Governor of the Province of Upper Canada and Major General Commanding His Majesty's Forces in said Province, &c., &c., &c.

The Memorial of Robert Nichol, Esquire

Humbly Sheweth.

That your Memorialist at various periods in the years 1814—1815—1816—& 1817 having been employed in investigating the Public Provincial Accounts—and the receipt of the Revenue from Lower Canada discovered great errors to the prejudice of this Province the whole of the War duties for the year 1813—having been withheld from this Province and unaccounted for—

That in Consequence of information furnished by Your Memorialist His Majesty's Government was enabled to make reclamations on Lower Canada by which Considerable Sums which would otherwise have been lost to this Province were ordered to be paid over to its order and more may be Confidently expected.

That your Memorialist has at all times cheerfully and without reserve communicated to the Several Commissioners and to the Arbitrator such information as he was possessed of on the Subject of the Revenue Concerns of this Province with Lower Canada and that he has reason to believe that the information Communicated by him has Materially assisted them in the performance of their duty—

*He was appointed Clerk of the Peace and Clerk of the District Court, having been strongly recommended by Thomas Clark and Thomas Dickson, at the same time.

That the House of Assembly sensible of the public Services rendered by your Memorialist and Considering them of a Nature meriting acknowledgement and remuneration addressed your Excellency to Advance a Sum of Money to your Memorialist as a reward for what he had done—which Address being the Act of one Branch of the Legislature your Memorialist is aware could not have effect—Your Memorialist however assures your Excellency that the Assembly Conscious that your Memorialist should be remunerated sent a Message to the Honorable the Legislative Council to concur in a joint Address, which he has reason to believe would have been assented to had the prorogation been delayed half an hour longer.

That from the destruction of the property of your Memorialist by the Enemy during the late War and other Causes—His circumstances have been very Much reduced and he has recently been pressed for small Sums which have Compelled him to Make great Sacrifices to free himself from obligation—and that the Advance of the Sum which was the wish of House of Assembly to give him—would be a very Seasonable Supply and would relieve him from pressing Embarrassments.

Wherefore your Memorialist humbly hopes that your Excellency will be graciously pleased to view his public Services in a favorable light and afford him such relief as to your Excellency May seem Meet and as in duty bound He will ever pray.

ROBT. NICHOL

York March 21—1823.

FROM THE COMMISSIONERS TO MAJOR HILLIER

STAMFORD, NOVEM. 2ND 1823

Sir

We had the honor to receive your letter of the 30th September some time ago in which you State that you have been commanded by His Excellency the Lieut. Governor to request our attention to a Communication addressed to us in March last respecting the subscription in aid of the fund appropriated by Parliament for erecting a Monument in memory of the late Major General Sir Isaac Brock, K.B. &c., &c., &c. and also requiring us to state what measures have been taken to Carry into effect the intentions of the Legislature—

To this letter we would have had the honor of replying at an earlier period had not one of Our Number (Mr. Nichol) been absent on other Official duties—

Enclosed we have the honour to transmit for His Excellency's information a Statement of Monies which have in Conformity to His Excellency's directions been paid into the hands of Mr. Clark, amounting to the Sum of One Hundred and Twenty Eight Pounds two Shillings and Eleven Pence and we beg to acquaint you that a letter has been received by Mr. Nichol from Henry Ruttan Esquire stating that he held the Sum of Fifteen Pounds payable to our Order which has not yet been drawn for.

We have the honor herewith to transmit the Model of a Tower which we have decided on erecting as the Most appropriate Monument we Could, with the Means at our disposal raise in Memory of the late Sir Isaac; and beg to acquaint you for His Excellency's information that we have Advertised for Contractors to execute the Work—We have also Communicated on the Subject with a

Mr. Hall a Civil Engineer recently from England as a person from whose professional talents we Might derive Considerable Assistance.*

We have the honor to remain &c.

Thomas Clark }
Thomas Dickson } Commrs.
Robt. Nichol }

Major Hillier A.D.C.

& Secy. &c., &c., &c.

(In the handwriting of Nichol who seems to have acted as Secretary to the Commissioners.)

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO MAJOR HILLIER

Private.

STAMFORD FEBY. 15—1824.

My Dear Sir

Having no authority to correspond with you Officially on Canal Matters—I make this private Communication to acquaint you that the Civil Engineer employed by the Commission for internal Navigation has bored the Beach at Burlington & has ascertained the practicability of Connecting that Lake with Ontario beyond all possibility of doubt—in prosecuting his researches in that Neighbourhood, he found a place where this could be effected with much more facility than at the place originally designated, and he acquainted me—that the Cuts on the largest Scales—may be effected much under the Original Estimate—the Engineer is gone to Kingston with the result of his Observations, and will form under the inspection of the President of the Board, Estimates that may be depended upon—of the Sums—required to Complete the communication on such of the Scales as may be adopted—

The President will communicate to you Officially this information—but it occurred to me that it would be desirable to put you in possession of it without delay.†

Believe Me &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

P.S. I send you a Memorandum of the distance and the Strata to be cut through in the Beach—

*The model adopted is described as “a Tuscan column on a rustic pedestal, with a pedestal for a statue; the diameter of the base of the column was sixteen feet and a half, and the abacus of the capital was surmounted with an iron railing.” The height of the monument from its base to the summit was 135 feet. The central shaft, containing a spiral stairway, was ten feet in diameter. The coffins enclosing the bodies of General Brock and Lieut.-Colonel Macdonell were removed from Fort George and deposited in the vault on the 13th October, 1824, with an impressive ceremony in the presence of a great assemblage of spectators. An account of this re-interment is given in a publication entitled “The Battle of Queenston Heights,” edited by John Symons, Toronto, 1859.

†The report of the committee is dated at York on 20 December, 1823, and is signed by John Macaulay, Charles Jones, James Gordon, and Robert Nichol. An estimate was submitted for connecting Lake Ontario with the Ottawa River by way of the Rideau lakes and river by a canal seven feet in depth, forty feet in width at the bottom and sixty-one feet in width on the surface of the water, and a total length of about one hundred and twenty-five miles at a cost of £69,785.9.1½.

“On a review of the summer’s operations,” they said, “the Commissioners have every reason to be gratified with the result, and they respectfully beg leave to bring

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO MAJOR HILLIER

My Dear Sir

STAMFORD FEB. 23, 1824.

Mr. Hall the Civil Engineer to whom I wrote last fall respecting the Monument has been here some days, and has furnished plans and Estimates, one for a Gothic and another for a Tuscan Tower with a Lantern & Platform at the top—The Tuscan he says is preferred by His Excellency of Course has been adopted by us—The Estimate for Completing this is something under £2,000—exclusive of the allowance to the Engineer for Management we shall therefore have to reduce the Scale or trust to Parliament for remuneration wherein I fear unless in the first instance Sanctioned by the Lieut. Governor would not be to be depended on. It is a pity Mr. Clark is not here to advise with at this time, however I write him by to days Post on the Subject. He will apply to you Officially respecting the ground on which to erect it—the Spot selected with the concurrence of the late Generals Brother is a kind of promontory directly overhanging the main Street of Queenstown and not in the way of any Military work—or likely to interfere with any hereafter—Should His Excellency come round, He will of Course be applied to here by the Commissioners on this side—

The Funds at our disposal—are

1. Parliamentary Grant	£1000
2. Interest accumulated thereon	700
3. Subscriptions paid in viz—	
to Mr. Clark	128
to R. Nichol viz	
from Jno. McCaulay	£73.0.0
H. Ruttan	18

91

—£1919—

Mr. Jonas Jones mentioned to me that He had collected some Money but the above is all that has been received by the Commissioners—the Net Sum to be paid after deducting Advertisements, postages, &c.,—will be about £1900—and I suppose the outlay including Mr. Hall's charge for Management—ten per Cent—will be about £2,200—unless we reduce the Scale—I should like you would give your Opinion what is best to be done—

I have to save the fund as much as possible put a packet, an advertisement for Fothergill. under Cover to you—which I hope you will not disapprove—

I am &c.

Major Hillier A.D.C.
& Secy.

ROBT. NICHOL.

under notice the benefit which has been derived from the long experience and professional ability of their chief Engineer Mr. Samuel Clowes, aided as he was by the zeal and assiduity of his assistant, Mr. James Clowes, and of the Land Surveyor, Mr. Reuben Sherwood."

Further estimates were submitted for the construction of canals connecting Lake Ontario with Burlington Bay and the formation of a safe and commodious harbour there. "It is considered unnecessary," they said, "to offer any observations on the importance of a harbour at the head of the lake, and the advantages which might accrue from a joint application to the same purpose of the late provincial appropriation and such aid as the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty might be induced to authorise." The contemplated canal between Lakes Erie and Ontario was primarily designed to connect the naval base at the mouth of the Grand river with that at Burlington Bay. Q 335-2, pp. 288-323.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO MAJOR HILLIER

YORK MARCH 3—1824.

Sir

The Office of Surrogate for The Niagara District having become Vacant by the death of Doctor Kerr*—I most respectfully Solicit His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor through you, to be appointed His Successor.

As I am well known to every Officer of the Executive Government of the Province, I conceive it to be unnecessary to say any thing further—than that I shall receive the appointment—should His Excellency be disposed to make it with gratitude—and that I shall endeavour by a faithful discharge of the duties appertaining to the Office to prove myself deserving of this Mark of His Excellency's consideration.

I have the honor to remain &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

To Major Hillier A.D.C.

& Secy. &c., &c., &c.

FROM ROBERT NICHOL TO MAJOR HILLIER

MRS. JORDANS—MARCH 3—1824.

My Dear Sir

I inclose a letter which I brought over with me from Colo. Clark—I need not say that I am acquainted with its Contents—I would not if things were with me as they once were importune the Government on any matter personal to myself but Considerations arising out of the actual state of my affairs—& the situation of a young family have urged me to prefer the request—that if no promise has been Made of the situation of Surrogate of the Niagara District vacant by the death of the late Doctor Kerr—that His Excellency would be pleased to Consider me as not undeserving of it—and that I might be appointed as his successor—

I shall have the honor of waiting on you tomorrow Morning with an Official application if such is the proper Course—

Believe Me &c.

ROBT. NICHOL.

Major Hillier A.D.C.

& Secy &c.

York.

FROM THOMAS CLARK TO ENSIGN MAITLAND

QUEENSTON MAY 6TH 1824—

Dear Sir

On the death of the late Doctor Kerr, I took the liberty of writing to Major Hillier, recommending the late Colo. Nichol and requesting his mentioning it to His Excellency the Lieut. Governor that Colonel Nichol would be a proper person to fill the situation of Surrogate Judge for the District of Niagara; which recommendation His Excellency was pleased to grant—Colonel Nichol's

*Dr. Robert Kerr of Niagara, who had died suddenly at Albany, N.Y.

death having again made that situation vacant—induces me (in the absence of Major Hillier) to request of you, that you would be so good as to say to His Excellency, that in my Opinion W. J. Kerr Esqr son of the late Dr. Kerr is in every way capable and would do justice to that situation if appointed—

I have the Honor to be &c.

THOMAS CLARK.

Ensign Maitland A.D.C. &c.

The following memorial from Mrs. Nichol reciting her husband's public services and losses and describing her own impoverished situation was forwarded in a lengthy covering letter from her brother-in-law, Walter Nichol, dated at Niagara, on 16 March, 1828, and was supported by copies of several documents, which are referred to in the memoir published in the "Papers and Records" of the Ontario Historical Society, Vol. XIX, pp. 57-8.

THE MEMORIAL OF THERESA NICHOL

To the Right Honorable William Huskisson His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for War & Colonies &c., &c., &c.

The Memorial of Theresa Nichol widow of the late Robert Nichol of Stamford in the Niagara District of the Province of Upper Canada Esq.

Humbly Sheweth,

That on the night of the 3rd of May 1824 your Memorialists late husband was returning to his residence at Stamford from the Town of Niagara where he had been performing his Official duties as Surrogate Judge of the said District when during a heavy snow storm having missed his road he was with his horse and waggon precipitated over the bank at Queenstown mountain by which fatal accident your Memorialist was left with four young children* almost wholly unprovided for.

That during the late war with the United States, your Memorialists husband held the important situation of Quarter Master General of militia in the said Province of Upper Canada, and was frequently intrusted with the same department of the line during the absence of the regular officer when employed on other duty or disabled by wounds and on all such occasions his Conduct received the approbation of the Commanding Generals.

That in consequence of his appointment to the said office on the earnest entreaty of the late Major General Sir Issac Brock, he relinquished an extensive and lucrative mercantile business and devoted his time and talents solely to military duty.

That at the commencement of the war, your Memorialists husband served on the expedition to Detroit in which his local knowledge was particularly useful and his zeal and ability highly appreciated by the Genl. And that in consequence of his Services on that occasion he was permitted to *bear the medal* which was struck commemorative of the capture as appears by the annexed copy of a letter from His late Royal Highness the Commander in Chief to your Memorialists husband dated 4th December 1817.

*These were Maria Theresa, b., 1813; Annabella, b., 1816; Robert Kerr Addison, b., 1820; Thomas Wright, b., 1824.

That on several occasions when the Commissariat of the Army was laboring under serious difficulties the intelligence and zeal of your Memorialists husband were had recourse to and found highly useful to His Majesty's Service; that at a most critical period of the war, on the retreat from Fort George his services and local knowledge were mainly useful in concentrating the Forces at Burlington heights, which measure was adopted in consequence of his suggestion.

That at Fort Erie when attached to Col. Bishops command his services and Counsel were particularly useful from his influence with the militia; that at Fort George he was warmly engaged with the enemy having volunteered his services as Aid De Camp to Colonel Myers and having had his horse killed in the action; that at a subsequent period he led one of the columns of assault on Fort Erie; that he was present at the repulse of General Smythe at the same place; and that he suggested the plan by which Captain Dobbs of the Navy captured two of the Enemys Vessels lying at Fort Erie (then in possession of the Enemy) having on this occasion transported the Boats which were employed a distance of seven miles by land carriage.

That these statements excepting the last (of which proof could likewise be obtained) are all corroborated by the respectable & Authentic testimonials of which your Memorialist takes the liberty to annex Copies & of which the originals will be found deposited in your office where they can be referred to amongst the correspondence for the years 1817 and 1818 commencing in July or Augt. of the former year.

That for these and other services His present Gracious Majesty then acting as Regent in the Name and on behalf of our late revered Sovereign was graciously pleased in addition to the honorary distinction above noticed to reward your Memorialists husband with an annual pension of £200 as appears by the annexed Copies of letters Nos. 8 & 9 from Mr. Harrison & Mr. Goulburn but in consequence of his melancholy fate it was enjoyed for so short a period as to do little more than reimburse the actual and unavoidable expences incurred by his voyage to England and during his long detention there while engaged in establishing his claim.

That upon the death of your Memorialists husband the above Pension ceased leaving your Mēmorialist and her children destitute of support, that upwards of three years have elapsed since this disastrous event during which your Memorialist and her children have suffered great and severe privations having been during that period entirely dependent on the casual bounty of strangers, a source of which she may be deprived at a moments notice.

That in explanation of this your Memorialist begs to add that her late husband having relinquished his mercantile business at the commencement of the war in order to attend to his military duties was unable on its termination to resume his original pursuits in consequence of the entire destruction of his property by the Enemy to whom he had become obnoxious and particularly marked for his zeal and activity in promotinig the King's service so that for some time previous to obtaining the pension he was gradually sinking into debt and mortgaging one part of his landed property (for all his personal property had been sacrificed during the war) after another for the immediate support of his family, and although an award in his favor amounting to £4202.10/ has been made by the commissioner appointed for the examination & revision of

claims for losses during the war, (his actual losses amounted to £6526.10/) it came at too late a period to be of any use in re-establishing the business or for replacing the buildings, necessary for carrying it on.—Your Memorialist further respectfully states that of the said award only £35 p. Ct. have yet been paid but even were it entirely paid up it would be insufficient to extricate the affairs of the Estate involved by the said losses—and accumulating for the last 12 years at Compound interest and that in a Country where the legal interest is £6 (six) per Cent. The whole of what has been received on that account has hitherto been appropriated to the liquidation of the claims of the Estate & the whole of the residue must go the same way without the hope of being able to satisfy more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the actual debts of the Estate—so that far from any residue arising from that fund for the benefit of your Memorialist and her children a considerable surplus of just debts must remain unpaid; and being deprived of the pension which of late years was the only support of the family your Memorialists forlorn situation may well be conceived.

Your Memorialist most humbly begs further to state that besides the situation above named her husband was distinguished by high and repeated marks of approbation of His Majesty's Government being Judge of Surrogate for the District of Niagara, Colonel in the Militia, Commissioner for the improvement of the internal navigation of the Province, and was also at various times on important Commissions having for their object the welfare of the Country. He was likewise distinguished by his fellow subjects in this Province as a member of the Legislature, having been elected to three successive parliaments in which he was instrumental in suggesting and promoting many measures beneficial to the country especially with regard to the Provincial Revenue.

Your Memorialist therefore hopes to be pardoned for her reliance on the benevolence and liberality of His Majesty's Government that the widow and children of a man who performed so many faithful services & who made such great personal sacrifices may be recommended as fit objects of His Majesty's bounty.

Your Memorialist being as she has stated destitute of every resource except what she derives from strangers begs to detain you a short time longer while she explains in what manner it is obtained—during her husbands long detention in England whilst the subject of his pension was under the consideration of His Majesty's Government he had become involved in considerable debts from which he was relieved by a loan from Mr. C. H. Turner of Rooks Nest near Godstone Surrey, England (a few years back High Sheriff of the County) but as a security for this loan it became necessary to take a mortgage on some lands which your Memorialist held in her own right previous to her marriage.*

Mr. Turner on being made acquainted with the melancholy circumstances of her husbands death instead of claiming the debt & selling the land of your Memorialist which would have completed the ruin of the family instantly made a present of his claim on the estate to your Memorialist and her children and directed his Agent in the Country (James Crooks Esqr.) to release the Mortgage for your Memorialists benefit as you Sir will perceive by annexed

*Cf. Will of Alexander Grant in "Papers and Records," Vol. XXIV, p. 385.

Copies of Letters to your Memorialist and her Brother in Law, Mr. Walter Nichol Nos. 12 & 13 from Mr. Turner; for the authenticity of which your Memorialist can with confidence refer to Mr. Turner. The lands thus released by the generosity of that Gentleman have been placed in the hands of a few respectable individuals as Trustees with permission to sell the same and from these individuals so secured your Memorialist derives a small annual income; but in proportion as sales of the land are effected, the source from whence your Memorialists income is derived, becomes gradually lessened & must in a short time be entirely exhausted leaving your Memorialist in absolute penury and want.

To save you Sir inconvenience or trouble by any reference to Mr. Turner—that Gentleman has been written to with a request that he will either call at your Office to confirm these facts or furnish such Vouchers under his hand as will corroborate your Memorialists statement. It is alone to this Gentmns Liberality your Memorialist is indebted for her present subsistence aided by those Gentlemen in the Country who have taken the Land and furnished the advances. The future situation of your Memorialist is nevertheless most gloomy in prospect and dreadful in anticipation and therefore your Memorialist most humbly and earnestly entreats that her case and that of her children may be represented to the favorable consideration of His Majesty's Government and that you Sir will promote it with your powerful influence.

It would be exceedingly improper for your Memorialist to presume to name any specific amt.; but she earnestly hopes that it may be recommended to His Majesty graciously to extend to your Memorialist such part of the Pension enjoyed by her late husband as a reward for actual services as in the opinion of His Majesty's Government may seem suitable to her present circumstances and the rank of her late husband together with a small annual allowance to support and educate the children until they may respectively arrive at the age of 21.

Your Memorialist begs to add that she is the Daughter of a medical Officer* who long & faithfully served the Country and who died in His Majesty's Service whilst attached to the 60th Regt. then stationed in Jamaica. The paper annexed No. 14 although without date bears sufficient evidence of the nature of the service and the time when it was written and the affidavit of your Memorialist thereto appended may serve to prove its authenticity. It is also hoped that this may be corroborated by a reference to the War Office.

Your Memorialist is unwilling to take up more of your time than to state that she is a Grand daughter of the late Commodore & President Grant who so long commanded His Majesty's Naval Force on Lake Erie and if it be not deemed irrelevant she would add that it was owing to his care and kindness subsequent to her fathers death that no application was made to His Majesty's Government on her behalf under the destitute situation occasioned by that event.† Your Memorialist respectfully submits that the widow of the late Adjutant General of Militia of Upper Canada (Æneas Shaw) is now in the

*Dr. Thomas Wright.

†Cf. Macdonald's "Commodore Alexander Grant"—"Papers and Records," XXII, p. 176.

enjoyment of a pension from His Majesty's Government and as the two cases are nearly analogous except that Mrs. Shaw is not like your Memorialist burdened with a family your Memorialist hopes to be considered on the same favorable footing by His Majesty's Government.

Your Memorialist as in duty bound will ever pray.

THERESA NICHOL.

Niagara 10th March 1828

Signed in presence of

J. Muirhead this 16 }

day of May 1828. }

(Q. 350 Pt. 2, pp. 277-86.)

In his volume entitled "Sketches of Canada and the United States," published in 1833, William Lyon Mackenzie recorded his recollections of Colonel Nichol's last days.

"Early in May, 1824, I had accompanied Colonel Robert Nichol, a distinguished member of the colonial legislature, on a journey across to York; he was in fine health and spirits, full of schemes for public improvements thereafter to be made. Little did he think how near he was to the confines of eternity, to that dread moment when, with Dr. Dodd, he could exclaim 'Now for the grand secret.' Towards the middle of the month he called on me at my house in Queenston, and we had a long argument on colonial politics; the further discussion of which was to be continued at a future day at his place in Stamford. He was then a candidate for the town of Niagara and on the evening of the 18th stopped late in the village. The road to Stamford is along the high bank of the Niagara, and so up the hill at Queenston; and it appeared at the inquest, held on the 20th, that (probably about midnight) he had driven his own horse carriage fairly to the top of the hill, and instead of keeping to the right, had obliged the horse to drive towards the bushes which conceal the edge of the gulph; and that, on the animal getting entangled among them, one of the wheels of the carriage had gone over the bank, and the seat and rider tumbled out. Next day, man, horse, and carriage were found on the low bank of the river, dashed to pieces; they must have been precipitated several hundred feet perpendicular from the summit of that fatal rock, over which the unfortunate gentleman had driven. There was some suspicion of foul play, for the colonel had many enemies; but the coroner's jury, of which I was foreman, saw no ground for ascribing his death to any cause remote from the accident." pp. 205-6.

"The country had determined to erect a column 120 feet high to the memory of General Sir Isaac Brock, who fell in battle on those heights in 1813. The legislature by an act had named Thomas Dickson, Esq., the Hon. Thomas Clark, and Colonel Robert Nichol, commissioners to superintend the work; and Mr. Francis Hall, now of the Shubenacadie Canal, was chosen by them as their engineer.

"A few days before he tumbled over the rocks, Col. Nichol called at my house, to inform me that the foundation of this monument (which has been erected 400 or 500 feet above the level of the waters of the Niagara) would be

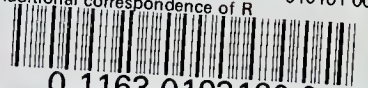
laid with masonic honours, and that one or more lodges from York had promised to be present; and when the workmen were nearly ready, Mr. Hall was asked if he would name a day, and thereafter told me that the foundation would be laid on any day the contractors pleased; but that the procession would be deferred until the 13th of October, being the anniversary of General Brock's death." pp. 314-5.

There are several obvious errors in this account. Nichol was certainly killed on the night of May third and buried on the sixth. General Brock was killed in 1812. The town of Niagara was made an electoral district in 1824 and Edward McBride was elected its member of the Assembly. It is not improbable that Nichol may have intended to become a candidate.

Date Due

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Nichol, Robert, 1774?-182
Additional correspondence of R 010101 000



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Nichol, Robert

Additional correspondence of
Robert Nichol.

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